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IN  
BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA  
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HUMAN PROBLEMS  
IN  
BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA  
  
XX

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## SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN CENTRAL AFRICA <sup>1</sup>

by  
MAX GLUCKMAN

BRITISH Central Africa, like most of the other present political states of Africa, is a region demarcated by European actions during the last century. It comprises three territories occupied in different ways by British authorities and settlers, and thus separated from territories occupied by Portuguese to the east and west, Belgians to the north, Germans to the north-east and south-west, and Boers to the south. These three territories—Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—were federated only in 1953. Within the borders of the territories are contained many different geographical regions, and they are inhabited by African peoples of different cultural origin. They have different histories of colonization. Nevertheless, it is convenient to take the three territories as a unit in examining anthropological research in Central Africa as a whole. Since 1938 more research in Central Africa has been carried out by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, which serves these territories, than by other workers in the neighbouring states. As far as research is concerned, during the last fifteen years there has been unity of purpose and problem in British Central Africa.

The development of this research is a story in which I myself have played a leading part, and therefore I find it somewhat embarrassing to tell the story. In 1939 I joined the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute as a Research Officer under the late Godfrey Wilson, and I directed the Institute from 1941 to 1947. When I left it to become a teacher, first at Oxford and then at Manchester, I continued to participate in the Institute's research work, and taught, and co-operated with, almost all its officers. Hence when I come to assess recent research I am in danger of succumbing either to vanity or false modesty in judgment of myself as a research worker and a teacher; and, beyond this, of alienating the friends who preceded me in the field or collaborated with me. But I shall try to assess that work, and hope that discretion may sufficiently temper such intellectual honesty as I have so that I may escape these dangers. I feel that this is a better course to take than merely reciting the work that has been done. Therefore what I attempt here is a personal account and interpretation of three interwoven stories: an analysis of the social systems of the region, a statement of the

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered to the Royal Society of Arts, March 1955, and published in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 103 (1955). The lecture is re-published here by permission of the Council of the Royal Society of Arts.

contribution which our studies of these systems has made to our general understanding of social life, and an indication of the history of how we have learnt to understand those systems.

Most people who read about Central Africa before the British occupation do so in the books of the great missionary writers such as David Livingstone, Robert Moffat and François Coillard, or of administrators such as Sir Harry Johnston. The general picture they give is of a region torn by savage warfare and by the raids of the Ndebele (Matabele) in the south and the Ngoni (Mazitu) in the north, and ravaged by slave-traders, Portuguese, Arab and African. The tribal raiders came from several directions and attacked both already established African states and congeries of small tribes without highly organized governments. The slavers, armed with muskets, in general raided the weaker groups and traded with the stronger ones, though they were prepared on occasion to meet nations as strong as the Bemba in battle.

It was characteristic of that period that all the African societies of the region were basically cultivators with hoes. Some of them were able to add to their food-supply by herding cattle and small stock where grazing was present and tsetse fly absent, by fishing in the numerous rivers and lakes, and by hunting in the woodlands. Many of the tribes smelted and worked iron into hoes, axes, adzes, spears and knives. They all made string from bark and roots, built their houses of wood and mud or grass, carved dugouts and utensils from wood, moulded pots from clay. Barkcloth and skins were the common native wear, though there was some spinning and weaving of kidney cotton.

The agricultural systems (Allan, 1949; Trapnell) of the region mostly involved wide shifting, but they varied in complexity. The Serenje Lala practised the simplest form of the ash-planting or *citimene* system (Peters, 1950): they felled a large area of woodland, piled the branches for burning in numerous small circles, and planted millet in the ash seed-bed, which they used only for a single season. This system could carry in perpetuity only about six people per square mile. The warlike Bemba state to the east had a more elaborate variant of this system (Richards, 1939): they lopped instead of felling the trees and then piled the branches in large circles with consequent smaller loss from rain and weeds around the margins. These large-circle gardens were planted for several years to a sequence of crops. Because of the shorter regeneration period of the lopped trees, the longer use of gardens, and other economies inherent in the system, the Bemba method of land-use had a higher carrying-capacity than that of the Lala, possibly of the order of ten or twelve people per square mile. These systems of agriculture depend on an abundance of wood to burn, and not on the fertility of the soil itself. Other tribes cleared their gardens of trees by felling and burning but were careful soil selectors; yet they were still wide shifting cultivators. But one section of the Mambwe

used more permanent gardens kept going by an elaborate system of green manuring. Many tribes also used riverside gardens, renewed annually by the silt from floods. Among the Lozi (Gluckman, 1941), who inhabit the great flood-plain on the Zambezi's upper course, the use of alluvial gardens was highly developed: their kings drained vast stretches of peaty soil at the margins of the plain to provide rich gardens. The Lozi also ridged gardens



by turning in grass to provide fertile plots which would stand above the early floods. Here there was a highly developed agriculture, which Government experts said they could not improve without elaborate experiments. But since the gardens consisted of fertile pockets interspersed with large areas of uncultivable soil, they could not support dense populations. All these peoples therefore were thinly spread over the land, producing even in a good year little beyond what they and their families could consume.



We owe our detailed and penetrating knowledge of the shortcomings and the advantages of these African agricultural systems mainly to a brilliant team of research workers in the Northern Rhodesian Agricultural Department. This team was led on the agricultural side by Mr. W. Allan and the ecological basis for its work was laid down by Mr. C. G. Trapnell. I am glad to have this opportunity of paying tribute to this work, as an important basis for sound anthropological research; recently a member of the team, the late Mr. David Peters, carried out studies in the Central Barotse Plain where I had worked, and showed that an adequate agricultural study required that I modify my own analysis. But here, as a former Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, though weaknesses in my own work are shown, I can claim that we anthropologists were the first to recognize this. After I had collaborated in a field study of the Mazabuka Tonga (Allan and others, 1948) with the above three officers, I was able to publish in the Rhodes-Livingstone Papers not only our own study, but also to rescue, from Government files and the maws of white ants, two other studies by Allan (1949) and a report by Peters (1950). I hope the Institute will also publish Peters' work on the Barotse Plain. Allan's studies in particular include an important theoretical analysis of the basic principles of subsistence agriculture. On the basis of Trapnell's ecological surveys, in which he worked out associations between types of vegetation, soils, crops and agricultural systems, Allan set out to calculate the carrying capacity of different types of land and agriculture. The carrying capacity of such a system is that population which it can support in perpetuity—calculated per square mile it gives the critical population density. This figure takes into account the amount of cultivable soil, which over Northern Rhodesia lies probably only between 15 and 25 per cent, the fertility of the soil, methods of fertilization and rotation, and the crop used, as well as methods of cultivation. A change in any of these variables alters the critical density. Climatic factors, like six months' rain and six months' drought, also kept the population low. Allan and his colleagues calculated the critical densities of various systems, and found for Northern Rhodesia that they probably ranged from under 6 to somewhere around 30 only. Over vast areas low densities only were possible because the soils of the ancient plateau were badly leached, and only a few favoured areas allowed the higher densities. Many other factors produced low densities by reducing the cultivable percentage, such as presence of tsetse fly or absence of surface water. This calculation has practical importance, for once the critical point is reached it means that the people have to cultivate on soils before they are properly regenerated, and the cycle of land degradation begins. Practical problems indeed compelled Allan to elaborate his theoretical system: many tribes had been settled in reserves demarcated on the assumption that two-thirds of the land was cultivable, and with gross underestimates

of the area required if a man were to have sufficient gardens to enable him to move through them and yet allow the land to regenerate properly.

Every anthropologist has to take account of the system of working land to obtain food, etc. : Dr. Audrey Richards in 1932-4 investigated the relation between this system and Bemba society and produced, in 1939, a book which remains the best study of its kind. It deals with an ash-planting people with a relatively simple agriculture. I feel it is impertinent for me to mention my own study of Barotse society (1941) in its ecological relations in the same paragraph with hers, but I do so because I was dealing with a complex agricultural, fishing and pasturing economy.

These agricultural studies form a basis for a study of individual societies ; in addition, they are important for an understanding of the history of the whole region. If one reads Livingstone's accounts of his long journeys between villages, the impression is of an empty land. Even if today one flies over miles of seemingly uninhabited and unused woodland, one may conclude that the region is still underpopulated, despite a probable big increase since British occupation. But as a result of the work of Allan and his team we now know that the African systems of agriculture could only support sparse populations, and that despite the appearance of plenty of land, pressure might be heavy. This may well have been an important cause of those constant migrations of people which recur in African history, when tribes and nations split and sections embarked on careers of conquest. This is plain where populations are obviously dense, but the important factor is critical density for the system of production and not absolute density. Certainly the picture we are building up of early African history is of constant marches of conquest which led to the creation of small empires. But these small empires had little internal stability because their internal economic relations were scarcely differentiated (Gluckman, 1954). Hence when pressure became great again sections of the empire would themselves start on careers of conquest, or in the wider spaces of their new homes the empires would disintegrate. There are, of course, exceptions to this general picture, in specific places : an important one in Central Africa is the Barotse Plain. Here a complex environment, differing markedly from surrounding regions, led to a highly complicated system of exchange of goods (both by barter and by tribute to the king who redistributed it among his people) which seems to have given great stability to the empire. I have suggested (1941) that whoever ruled in the Barotse Plain was bound to dominate the region, as whoever held London was bound to dominate England.

At the period when these peoples come into our recent knowledge then, they show us conquering hordes sweeping across the land to establish an ephemeral empire over other small states or over tribes without State-like organizations. And some of these latter people



persisted unsubdued in various areas. The conquering hordes during last century were also set in movement by contacts with Europeans and Arabs, and by the acquisition of muskets and thus superiority in weapons. The most notable of the former type were the northward marches of groups from the Natal-Basutoland region. Here there had existed from at least the fifteenth century a polity of small tribes, moving steadily southwards and westwards, rarely subduing their fellows but in relations of alternating peace and war with them. Around 1770 this movement came into conflict with the Cape Colonists, and the repercussions led to a series of struggles in the present Natal-Zululand region in which some tribes came to dominate their neighbours. These dominant groups then fought each other and the Zulu emerged triumphant. But sections of the defeated started on headlong marches of conquest and set other tribes going on similar careers. Altogether the following states emerged besides the Zulu: the Shangana of Mozambique, whom Livingstone saw as Landeens drawing tribute from the Portuguese at Tete; the Basuto under Moshesh; the several Ngoni or Mazitu kingdoms of Central and East Africa, some of whom reached Lake Victoria Nyanza; the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia; and the Kololo who, under Sebituane, conquered Barotseland for a time and helped Livingstone on his first transcontinental journeys. Earlier the great Lunda kingdom in the Congo basin, under Mwatianvwa, had sent out sections to conquer around the headwaters of the Zambezi, on the Luapula, and the Chambeshi. Other empires were established by small groups armed with muskets, notably the Garenganze (Yeke) kingdom of Msidi in Katanga. The Yao who, possibly under the pressure of Arab slavers or other tribes, moved from the Rovuma River round the south of Lake Nyasa, conquered widely. Here, between Livingstone's visit in 1860 and his return a few months later, they burnt, destroyed and enslaved a happy and populous people. In this region too, Portuguese half-caste traders built little states, and further north this was the policy of Arab slavers.

This general process, involving the rise and fall of small empires, presumably proceeded in Central Africa for centuries. But previous to this period there had existed in Africa states on a more developed economic basis. The archaeological evidence (Caton-Thompson, 1931) that Zimbabwe and other ruins in Southern Rhodesia, the Transvaal and Free State (and possibly Angola), were built by Bantu-type people seems definite. These people were mining gold, nickel and silver to considerable depths, they had large stone buildings, and irrigated terraced gardens. They were trading through Arab ports such as Sofala to Arabia, Persia, India and beyond to China as far back at least as the tenth century. Archaeology, anthropology and history have still to study adequately these states and why they have passed away. It seems probable that they existed as islands surrounded by peoples at the stage of technological

development found in the nineteenth century. I mention them for they show that there was a period when Bantu technological development was greater and they indicate the long period during which external trade has existed for the region with unmeasured influence on political events.

I have sketched the general political history of the region up to the major arrival of Europeans. What problems does this history present to the anthropologist? Here I must turn to the history of anthropology outside the region. Modern anthropology is only some thirty years old. We owe a great debt to the missionaries, explorers and administrators who have left us accounts of contemporary life. Pre-eminent among the early ones were probably Livingstone, whose balanced reports on the Kololo and other peoples are invaluable, and Duff Macdonald on the Yao. Later, Dr. Edwin Smith, who was to become President of the Royal Anthropological Institute, with the late Captain Andrew Dale produced *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (1920) which still ranks as one of the classic comprehensive accounts of an African people. Our admiration of this work was expressed in the dedication to Dr. Smith of the first symposium published by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. But I know that Dr. Smith would join me in the judgment that his own work, with its attempted coverage of every phase of Ila life, is of a type which does not lend itself to systematic analysis; and that the modern professional field-worker making such a systematic analysis collects and presents more detailed and interconnected material. It is no slight on our predecessors, but a tribute to them, if we feel that by their aid we have surpassed their standards. These writers, and others like Bullock, Doke, Coxhead, Gouldsbury, Sheane and Melland were concerned to describe the customs and practices of a people completely. Today the anthropologist, both in collecting and in analysing his facts, attempts to show how each society exists as a system of regularities within its environment, and its foreign relations. In Africa, the first work of this kind was done in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan by Professor Evans-Pritchard. For the problems with which I am here concerned, the nature of political society, his pioneer work was on the Nuer (1940). They are a people without governmental institutions, one of those societies where rights are theoretically secured by self-help and the threat of the feud. Evans-Pritchard was able to present for us the mechanisms by which such a society maintains internal order and organizes for war, and by which its social structure, as an ordered arrangement of social relations, persists through time. His work was followed up by anthropologists in other parts of Africa. In Central Africa we have so far reports on only one society of this type, the Mazabuka Tonga, though studies have been made of the Yao and Lakeside Tonga of Nyasaland, and the Mambwe and Cewa of Northern Rhodesia, who have very small chieftainships. For general sociological theory all these

studies are important; but the Mazabuka Tonga presented to Dr. Elizabeth Colson a series of particularly fascinating problems. They had been badly smashed by raids from an unknown chief Pingola and later by Kololo, Ndebele and Barotse. They may once have had some form of chieftainship, but it had disappeared. They lived in small hamlets of kinsmen related in many lines, but who were frequently altering their residence. Their important kinship group consisted of a number of people related by maternal descent, who were scattered over a neighbourhood. This group was supposed to take vengeance for wrongs against its members, to protect its members, and to support them in all crises. It shared inheritances, and contributed to marriage expenses. But it kept dividing and had no local centre so that it was, over the generations, ephemeral. What was fixed was membership of twelve matrilineal clans, which spread among surrounding peoples. Numbers of these clans were linked together as 'joking partners', and had the right and the obligation to upbraid one another for certain offences: breach of the rules of exogamy which compel intermarriage and establish links between different sets of peoples; attempted suicide with its denial of the value of life; wastefulness with property; intolerance and aggressiveness in social relations; and so forth. The clans are widely dispersed and have no ritual cults, but they are the only persisting and enduring units of Tonga society and through the joking system they are associated with these fundamental social values. Joking partners are outsiders, unrelated people, who by gibes enforce observance of these values. However, Tonga belong not only to clans and to matrilineal kinship groups; they also have ties with their fathers' matrilineal group, they are members of hamlets, and they are members of neighbourhoods around those villages. And though there is no person who has authority in a neighbourhood, each neighbourhood is dependent for communal good fortune on a group of shrines tended on by a certain family. Ritual is performed at these shrines for rain and for relief against epidemics. The shrines are ephemeral, and it seems likely that their distribution at any one time corresponded with altering alignments of social ties; but they represent the common interests in rain, good crops, freedom from epidemics, etc., of individuals who live together. Yet the other ties pulled these individuals in other directions into association with members of other rain-shrine communities. Dr. Colson, in a series of important articles, has analysed these varying sets of ties. She has shown that despite the apparent absence of any sort of authority, some redress for wrongs and attainment of rights was achieved because individuals were subject to conflicting loyalties in the various sets, so that, to put it strongly, their friends in one set were their enemies in another. In an article on 'Social Control and Vengeance in Plateau Tonga Society' (1953a) she has analysed how this can bring about a settlement of a dispute even though there is no one

with authority to back a judgment on rights and wrongs. I know of no society which brings out so well as Tonga society does the importance of the many-sided social affiliations of every individual and group ; and I may add that I know no better series of analyses than those written by Dr. Colson. The significance of this principle has also been worked out by other officers of the Institute among the Mwinilunga Lunda, the Yao and the Mambwe, and by Prof. Barnes and myself for the Fort Jameson Ngoni and Barotse States. Outside our ranks, Professor Monica Wilson, wife of our first Director, has done this for the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.

Part of the importance of Dr. Colson's study lies in her analysis of how a series of kinship ties, born in the family, are built into a political structure. Again, this is a general problem which has been tackled by all our officers. I take the work of Prof. Clyde Mitchell on the Yao. The Yao are an Islamized people dwelling in the Shire region of Nyasaland ; they entered the region as slavers and came to blows with Livingstone and Bishop Mackenzie, who were forced into resisting their attacks on the Nyanja indigenes. The Yao were organized in small chieftainships largely built on domestic slavery, and they, with the Bisa, were for a long time intermediaries in the slave and ivory trade from the interior to the Portuguese and Arabs of the East Coast. In return they obtained chiefly cloth, trinkets and gunpowder. Though they were organized in small groups, their fire-power enabled them to conquer and raid successfully. The Yao have a matrilineal descent system—i.e. they trace descent, for purposes of succession, from mother's brother to sister's son. Every ambitious Yao, in common with every ambitious Central African, strove to build around him a group of followers. There were two ways of doing this : by capturing and holding slaves, and by keeping the female members of one's matrilineal descent-group and their children. Mitchell has analysed the political system of the Yao as a system of villages united through their headman with a chief who is *primus inter pares*. He has related the superstructure of these political relations to the history of the people through the institution of 'perpetual kinship', by which two political positions are established in permanent relations of a particular kind of kinship. Each incumbent who succeeds to a position takes over this relationship whatever his personal ties of kinship with the occupants of other political positions. This superstructure is tied into kinship relations within villages. Mitchell also examines the manner in which charges of witchcraft and divinations of the ancestors' will are manipulated by individuals in serving their interests within these systems of relations, which contains sources of conflict through contradictions in their rules. Dr. Turner is developing this kind of analysis for the Mwinilunga Lunda.

I consider Mitchell's study of perpetual kinship to be an advance on work done on this problem in other parts of Africa. It is



supported by an equally valuable study by Dr. Ian Cunnison of a similar institution in the great Kazembe kingdom of the Luapula River. Cunnison has produced an almost mathematical analysis of how these institutional arrangements operate to stabilize these political structures at a particular size. He shows how the kinship terminology, modes of succession, ritual observances, etc., are all involved in this process. His study of *History on the Luapula* thus makes clear the danger of using African (or other) genealogical records as a means of dating the complex history of the continent. He also develops skilfully a series of problems posed by Evans-Pritchard, the problem of the coexistence in a single social system of sub-systems each of which has involved in its structure a different sequence-scale of events. Thus he opens up a new field of research. I can perhaps best summarize these problems by English examples: England's history involves the separate histories of the land as a whole, of the monarchy, of Parliament, of Oxford colleges and London livery companies, and so forth, and all of these histories are involved in one another. The working out of this complex process is obviously a fascinating field for anthropological research. His work has been followed up and demonstrated in a different type of system by Dr. Watson on the Mambwe; and it has been separately treated by Barnes and Professor Margaret Read on different Ngoni tribes. (See Cunnison, 1956*b*.)

I have said that in the history of anthropology the critical problem in studying societies without governmental institutions has been to work out how they maintain themselves as an ordered system of relations, and resist internal disorder and external attack. When we approach societies organized as states with governmental authority in a familiar pattern of delegated authority, some of the institutions which achieve these ends are obvious. There are legislative, administrative, military and judicial officers. In these states modern research has become primarily interested in extracting the divisions and conflicts which exist within the system of authority, and showing how these are built into the state system, so that conflict itself becomes a basis of social cohesion. These are problems in which I have myself been particularly interested: they were thrown into my lap by the Barotse social system itself. The Barotse State has a very elaborate central political authority where there is explicit representation of the different elements of the state—what we call King, Lords and Commons. I have been able to indicate (Gluckman, 1951) how even in these simple economic systems, where there exists little conflict of interest between different functional groups, the very existence of authority arouses certain conflicts. These are then met by certain countervailing institutions which exist throughout the governmental hierarchy. The processes involving these institutions are thus not simply consistent but are in fact opposed to one another, so that through a period of time despite changes in personnel, quarrels and so forth, the processes



operate to compensate one another and re-establish the pattern of relations. I cite only one important conclusion, that in these systems a civil war does not break up but maintains the political system as a whole (Gluckman, 1951, 1954*a*, 1954*b*). This process works through an elaborate division of institutions, which has been demonstrated in detail through several systems. There are, of course, other problems involved in authority systems. Again, one example must suffice to exhibit these. In all our societies we have been interested in the position of the village headman—the man who stands at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy, and yet is mixing constantly with the subjects. He is a subject and a ruler at once. This exposes his position to great strains and raises a problem of general interest, for it is similar to the position of the factory foreman, the school prefect, the political party whip and so forth (Gluckman, Mitchell & Barnes, 1949).

A number of specialized studies fall into the political field, which throughout Africa have yet to be worked out thoroughly. As we begin to understand how African political systems are constructed we have to pass to an analysis of how they work. This involves separate treatments of law, of warfare, and of administrative and legislative decision. It is in the study of African law that studies in the region have so far made the most notable contributions. And here I must first express my admiration of the studies by Professor Schapera of Tswana law and legislation, in an area just to the south of our own, for these have been a constant guide to my own work on these problems. Godfrey Wilson (1938) and I (1943*a*) have published analyses of the land-tenure systems of the Nyakyusa and Barotse in relation to their social structure, which I believe are the main theoretical treatments of this subject. I also drew attention (1943*a*) to a distinction made by the Barotse between tribute and royal goods which is intrinsically interesting and also significant when we consider the problems of technical development in African jurisprudence. But here our most important work has been on the African judicial process. Similar work on non-Western societies has only been done by some American anthropologists. I myself (1955) after several years of writing have just published a study of the judicial process among the Barotse which I feel I may justly call a pioneer work. It draws attention to the existence of the reasonable man in African law and develops some of the implications of his character. It also considers for these systems the existence of the law of nature and the law of nations, and the use of equity, the relation between law custom and morality, and the judicial use of knowledge of the physical laws of nature. Finally, it concludes by examining the relation between certainty of legal rule and uncertainty of judicial decision. These are perennial problems of jurisprudence. They have been examined independently by Dr. A. L. Epstein (1953; 1954*a*) in two excellent studies of the institution, development and problems of the African Urban

Courts established by the Northern Rhodesian Government in towns. I plan to follow my study of the reasoning of law with studies of the political problems of law, and the relation between Barotse ideas of jurisprudence and their social structure. Meanwhile, Dr. Holleman (1952a) has produced a detailed study of Shona law, in Southern Rhodesia, which parallels Schapera's *Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*.

The most important study of administration so far published is by Barnes on the Fort Jameson Ngoni (1954). But this book also marks a different development in anthropology in general, in which Evans-Pritchard on the Senussi and Schapera on the Tswana have been pioneers. We now begin to understand the systematic structure of African societies, both through individual intensive studies and through comparing these one with the other. Our next task is obviously to turn back to their histories, in order to see how these systems functioned and changed through particular series of external events. Barnes has done this with skill and detail, and he has made full use of archival material. G. Wilson analysed more sketchily the constitution of the Ngonde of N. Nyasaland. Here is an important meeting-ground for anthropologists and historians. I must confess that I am sadly disappointed in reading most colonial histories to find that they still regard the African peoples, into whose midst Europeans came, as an undifferentiated mass of savagery. Few historical studies, despite the magnificent lead set by Professor W. M. Macmillan in South Africa, make an adequate attempt to understand the internal and foreign relations which determined particular tribes' reactions to the European incomers. For these to be worked out properly, the historian must take into account anthropological analysis, and weigh it against the direct evidence of contemporary records which were often biased by particular viewpoints and by ignorance of the workings of an African society that has been unable to leave its own written records. I find it striking that the only historian of the slave-trade who has examined why some tribes refused to deal with the slavers while others did so and yet others became their agents, is Mr. L. H. Gann, who as an officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute worked closely with anthropologists. In other problems too he has shown an awareness of problems arising from the nature of African tribal society which I find lacking in his colleagues.

The classic field of anthropology since its early years has been the study of kinship and ritual. I have touched on the manner in which kinship relationships are tied into the political structure and on how this problem has been handled by Colson, Cunnison and Mitchell. Otherwise, most important work in this field concentrates on two sets of problems. The first arises from marriage, where Dr. Audrey Richards set the lead with an excellent study of *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions* (1940b), which is the first full study of marriage for an African matrilineal system.

Later she followed this with a comparative study of matrilineal systems throughout Central Africa, published in a symposium on *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (1950). In that symposium I presented a hypothesis that jural stability of marriage is associated with a patrilineal form of kinship organization, and jural instability of marriage with other forms, by comparing the Lozi of Barotseland with the Zulu. This hypothesis has been taken up and is being checked by my colleagues. Barnes has already approved of it for changes in the marriage system of the Fort Jameson Ngoni which he worked out in detail (1949). He has also in a separate paper set out better methods for measuring divorce rates in societies where marriages and divorces are not registered. This is essential as we come to compare societies with smaller differences of rates than those of the Zulu, with no divorce, and the Lozi, with many divorces. This paper of Barnes's is also important as signifying one valuable development of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute's programme, the elaboration of statistical and quantitative work which becomes increasingly important in order to refine our accumulating qualitative knowledge. Here Barnes, Colson and Mitchell have given a lead which later officers have followed, and, in the absence of good population data, these anthropologists have made important contributions in analysis of small sets of demographic data (Mitchell, 1949*b*; Colson, 1954*a*).

Barnes's paper on Ngoni marriage, like Richards's earlier study, also examines the internal balance between different kinds of kinship relations in different systems. This second set of problems has been taken up by Colson, Mitchell, Turner and Watson. Here they have principally examined how kinship ties, generational association and local settlement are interwoven. The main publication, however, falls on the borders of the region, Professor Monica Wilson's *Good Company* (1951*a*), which analyses the unusual system of villages of age-mates among the Nyakyusa.

There has been less work on the problems of ritual. But these are being tackled in a sociological manner. During the early years of anthropology scholars tended to interpret ritual practices and beliefs by working out how they themselves would have come to formulate beliefs or how they would themselves in practice operate the beliefs. Evans-Pritchard started us on a new line of analysis when he showed how the Azande of the Sudan use beliefs in witchcraft, oracles and magic to cope with the misfortunes of life and relate their misfortunes to disturbances in their social relations. His study of how these beliefs and practices are systematized and maintained is so sound that we have been able to apply it throughout the region. But he also indicated the important connection between the types of persons who are accused of witchcraft and the structure of a particular social system. Several workers have been pursuing and refining this analysis: Colson on the Tonga, Marwick on the Cewa, Mitchell on the Yao, Turner on the Lunda, Watson on the

Mambwe, White on the Luvale, Wilson on the Nyakyusa. Again, it is become a truism to say that a cult of the spirits of the kinsfolk is related to the kinship organization of a particular society: the significant sociological line of advance is to examine how, like accusations of witchcraft, particular ascriptions of misfortune or prosperity to certain spirits are connected with particular alignments of relations between the people involved at a certain time. When this is done, we shall begin to understand the processes which relate these systems of ritual to particular types of structure. Here Colson and Mitchell have again opened up important problems; Turner has just sent to press, and M. Wilson is engaged on, studies which I believe will be of outstanding importance.

There are two major weaknesses in all this work. The first is the relative absence of detailed economic studies. Richards, Brelsford, Deane and myself have touched on these problems; but the Institute despite several years of search has failed to find an economist willing to do the necessary fieldwork. This is a general weakness throughout British anthropology and only one member of our Association of Social Anthropologists of the British Commonwealth states that he is especially interested in economic problems. I have not the space to examine why this should be so. The second weakness is that we have all been so busy with presenting the results of our individual studies, and with other work in teaching and administration, that none of us has had the opportunity to pull these different analyses together. Godfrey and Monica Wilson have written a most stimulating book which covers events in the region, but they were primarily interested in social change. I hope that we shall soon see a series of comparative studies to cover the indigenous institutions of British Central Africa.

I set out in appendices what tribes and what kinds of social relations we have studied satisfactorily. There is no doubt that in the last twenty years we have acquired a knowledge of the peoples of British Central Africa that cannot be surpassed for any other part of the continent. And we have not yet published all the results of the field-research that has been done. There are many peoples and problems yet to study, but taking into account the total small strength of British anthropology, and our ignorance in 1930, the achievement is considerable. And it is of high quality. Furthermore, most of this work has been done by scholars working in co-operation, tackling similar problems, collecting figures on similar bases, and so forth. The next decade should see this work come to fruition. For I believe it will appear that the considerable financial investment in the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute will not only be justified by individual studies and by general development of public interest in the region, but also that it will exhibit a co-ordination that would be lacking if the research had been carried out by individuals from separate university departments. Singly and collectively the research will have made important contributions



to our knowledge of Africa and of human society; as an anthropologist, and as a person interested in my fellow creatures, I believe that to be sufficient justification of our work. I consider that this research also discharges a duty that Britain owes to the Africans themselves. This duty was put by Viscount Bryce to the Swiss missionary Junod: the exhortation made Junod change from entomological to anthropological studies, and gave us a series of great books on the Tsonga of Mozambique. Bryce said: 'How thankful should we be, we men of the nineteenth century, if a Roman had taken the trouble fully to investigate the habits of our Celtic forefathers! This work has not been done, and we shall always remain ignorant of things which would have interested us so much!'

It is not for me to say whether this research has assisted the different peoples and groups in the region. We can provide information and analysis, we do not take political decisions. And it is still an unsolved problem how far knowledge of a social situation is of help to the participants. Ignorance may be a necessary attribute of authority, as it is indeed often a frequent attribute. We have on specific occasions reported to government and other agencies on specific problems. But obviously, if persons in the region are to find anthropological studies useful or illuminating, these must also seek to study the changes occurring. And these changes involve important theoretical problems. I speak here of 'social change' and will discuss these changes as political, economic or religious problems, and so forth. I do not speak of 'race relations', for on the whole 'race relations' cannot be studied systematically, save under the conventional sociological heads. Race relations do raise specific problems, but these have to be assessed in the context of the political, economic, and other sub-systems of the society (Barnes, 1956).

For it is one society. Central Africa has become a territorial region inhabited by people of different ethnic origin, recognizing different values, having markedly different customs, but who are all in relationship with one another. They are bound together in a common political and economic system; and the effects of movements in this system influence every part of the lives of all the different groups. Hence most anthropologists, in treating the structure of indigenous institutions in African tribal groups, have described how these have changed in modern conditions: political systems, law, kinship relations, economic relations, productive processes and so forth. Practically no work—and this is true of the rest of Africa, save for a few books—practically no work has been done on the effects of missionary evangelization or of schooling, the work of the educationist. It is very important that the professional purveyor of white culture, as one of my colleagues calls him, should be investigated.

Perhaps the main foci of social change are the towns, and here



anthropologists have been doing more and more work. In Southern Africa the pioneer work in this field was done by Dr. Ellen Hellmann in Rooiyard, a Johannesburg slumyard, and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute was proud to publish it after it had lain for ten years as a thesis. In Central Africa itself, the pioneer work was done by the first Director of the Institute—the late Godfrey Wilson. He had previously done research in South-West Tanganyika on the Nyakyusa tribe, and when he came to Northern Rhodesia he immediately began an investigation in Broken Hill of the processes of urbanization. He published his results in a characteristically penetrating analysis which is a classic in the field (G. Wilson, 1941 and 1942). Further research in the urban areas was not undertaken until after the War. Then Dr. Mitchell began a study of the sociography of the Copperbelt, using a team of African research assistants. In this, he collected the basic quantitative data on population structure, ethnic origins, education and so forth, which must be gathered for an analysis of a heterogeneous social system (see Mitchell, various). His work has now extended to cover Broken Hill and Lusaka, and Miss McCulloch has published a survey of Livingstone. All the towns on the Northern Rhodesian railway line have been covered. Similar surveys had been done by Ibbotson and Gussman in Southern Rhodesia, though they were not as detailed, and were oriented largely to problems of subsistence. Mitchell, and other members of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, have also data on these problems, though they have just begun to publish. Thomson (1954) has published a short study on dietetics in Lusaka. Miss Elsey Richardson, of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, is engaged on writing a full study of family economics and dietetics.

These sociographic surveys raise different sorts of problems. They raise the whole problem of what is urbanization, which Mitchell is attempting to refine (Mitchell, 1954c). They involve the working out of age and sex structure of the population, influence on behaviour of period of residence in the towns, and so forth. The tribal and national origins of the mixed populations of towns are also important, for they form important bases for social groupings. These studies lead on to a sociological analysis of the town situation, on which Mitchell has begun to write. Dr. A. L. Epstein had earlier, for the Colonial Office, here made a study of African Urban Courts, and now he is following this up with an analysis of the administrative and political problems of a Copperbelt town; his book on this, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, is in the press. I have not time to indicate the full complexity of the field in which these scholars are working. On the one hand they are deeply concerned with towns which have been established recently by heterogeneous groups and individuals, but which on the other hand very early exhibited an internal order and regularity of action. The towns of Central Africa are towns. Order was brought into them by the

governments and industrial enterprises which established them. But towns based on mining, and/or commerce, impose their own patterns of relations and of behaviour. The African who leaves his tribal area and enters a town changes his modes of action immediately: he does different work, associates with different people, becomes subject to different authorities, and so forth. An African miner is a miner, an African townsman is a townsman. This sets one range of problems. But it does not deny that an African's actions are not also continually influenced by the culture of his own tribe, or by his difference of tribal origin from some of his fellows and of common tribal origin with others, or by the varied length of his residence in towns, and other factors. These are significant. But the patterns of the towns explain the development of other social relationships and the rise of trade unions and similar 'Western' forms of organization. The marriage of these two sets of data and related problems presents problems of great sociological and statistical complexity, with which Mitchell and his associates are battling.

The towns impose their own patterns, and the effects of their establishment, and of the industrial opportunities they offer, dominate developments in the rural areas. All the tribes have been substantially affected by the need to get money, whether by the sale of crops or fish or cattle or by the sale of labour. Richards's classic study of the Bemba (1939), Read (1942), and studies in South Africa, as well as Government Commissions throughout Africa, drew attention to the way in which large-scale migration of men to the mines disturbed and impoverished tribal life. Schapera in a study of labour migration in Bechuanaland gave a clear overall analysis of the situation, and of balancing forces. Now Watson (unpublished) has made what I consider to be the fullest study for Central Africa of the effects of labour migration on tribal structure: he shows that the Mambwe by mobilizing their labour through co-operative groups of kin have profited from the new situation. Some tribes near to markets have done so by the sale of crops, eggs, chickens, etc. (Allan and others, 1948; Colson, various). The reaction in different tribes to the new situation has varied, and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute is preparing a symposium on this theme.

Investigation of the links which build up the region's politico-economic framework is only partially anthropological. Miss Phyllis Deane has published an analysis of the national income of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland for two selected years, and there are of course numerous government economic reports. But we need analysis of the whole problem of how Africans get to work: Niddrie has made a beginning on this point. Miss Elliot collected statistics on the overall labour migration situation in the territories: these have still to be analysed.

There are few histories of political and administrative developments. Dr. Hanna has just published a book on foreign relations

in Nyasaland in 1859-95, and Gann has in press a history of events in Northern Rhodesia up to 1924. There is a bare history of the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council. Histories of Southern Rhodesia are more numerous. Lord Hailey's surveys are useful, as are the now out-of-date Pim report on Northern Rhodesia and Bell report on Nyasaland. But detailed analyses of governmental and administrative problems are badly needed. When adequate studies of these types have been provided we shall begin to get a general view of social developments in Central Africa which will illuminate and be illuminated by the individual tribal and urban studies. The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute hopes soon to produce a symposium which will examine what colonization and industrialization have done to the region.

## APPENDIX I: TRIBAL STUDIES

### NORTHERN RHODESIA

*Lunda-Lubale Group* : Several articles on ritual by White (various), Gluckman (1949) and Turner (1953). Lunda village analysed by Turner (1955). Turner has completed three years' research and is preparing analysis.

*Barotse Group* : Analysis of ecology, economy, politics and kinship, by Gluckman (various) of dominant Lozi group. Other tribes only Clay (1946) on Mankoya history. In preparation Peters (forthcoming) on Lozi agriculture and by Gluckman on Lozi law and history.

*Ila-Tonga Group* : Smith and Dale (1920) produced excellent comprehensive old-style monograph on Ila, but Ila should be further studied, with this monograph as a base. Agricultural-economic survey of Plateau Tonga, by Allan and others (1948); and excellent analysis of politics, kinship and ritual structure, by Colson (various) who is engaged on major analysis of kinship and domestic life. Other sections of group not studied and Sala-Soli are important, and the Valley Tonga.

*Lamba-Lala-Kaonde Group* : Good agricultural studies, by Allan (1949) and Peters (1950). Good old-style monograph by Doke (1931), and two analytic surveys of Lamba (Barnes and Mitchell, 1950) and Kaonde (Watson, 1954) village structure. Further research required.

*Luapula Peoples* : Preliminary survey (1950) and analytic study of historical concepts (1951) by Cunnison, who is about to rewrite full analysis of political system.

*Bemba Group* : Full studies of social organization of main Bemba tribe in relation to system of producing and sharing food (1939) and of marriage (1940b), with shorter studies of kinship, politics, etc., by Richards. Several articles by Brelsford (various) and theoretical treatment of political system by Gluckman (1954b). Brelsford has written a paper on Unga tribe (1946) and Watson is engaged on a year's study of Lungu. Most important tribe in this group which is not yet studied is Bisa.

*Chewa Group* : Preliminary reports from Marwick, chiefly on witchcraft.

*North Rhodesian Ngoni* : Excellent analysis of history, politics and kinship by Barnes (various).

*Mambwe* : Comprehensive manuscript report by Watson has still to be prepared for publication.

#### NYASALAND

*Ngonde-Nyakyusa Group* : Excellent studies of village-structure, by the Wilsons (various), and preliminary reports on other problems, especially land-tenure (G. Wilson, 1938) and politics (G. Wilson, 1939a). M. Wilson engaged on analysis of ritual.

*Tumbuka-Kamanga-Lakeside Tonga Group* : Ethnographic notes, by Cullen Young ; field study under way, by Van Velsen.

*Yao-Nyanja Group* : Excellent preliminary papers by Mitchell, on politics, kinship and village organization ; full study of village structure (1956). Lomwe in the area should be studied next.

*Ngoni Group* : Gomini's Ngoni have been studied by Read and book in press ; she visited the Nzimba group, which should be studied in detail.

#### SOUTHERN RHODESIA

There has been little professional work in this territory. There are numerous articles and two ethnographic books by Bullock.

*Shona Group* : Holleman has begun the immense task of tackling this group with an important book on law, short books on kinship and ritual, and a general account. He is still engaged in writing-up. More work in this group is urgently required, and the Ndau seem to be the next which should be tackled.

*Ndebele Group* : The kingdom was badly shattered in war with the colonists, and the people scattered. There are some old ethnographic accounts of varying value ; Hughes has studied the group and his first publication has appeared.

#### SPECIFIC RURAL PROBLEMS

Studies have been made of labour migration and of the development of cash-cropping and fishing in certain areas, but no studies have been made of the new type of African peasant farmer, holding land on different terms, either in Northern Rhodesia or Southern Rhodesia.

#### URBAN AREAS

There are numerous Government and other reports in both Rhodesias, but the only ones of social anthropological value are by G. Wilson (1941-2), Mitchell (1953-4), and Epstein (1953, 1954a). Mitchell, Epstein, Richardson and McCulloch are preparing reports on research done. No sociological study has been made of European or Indian groups, or of modern functional groups such as factories. Here the field is so untouched that individual problems need not be detailed.

### APPENDIX II: PROBLEMS INVESTIGATED

#### TRIBAL INSTITUTIONS

*Agriculture* : Sound basis laid by Allan (1949) ; Trapnell and Clothier ; Allan and others (1948) ; Peters (1950 and forthcoming).

*Social Ecology*: Main problem in Richards (1939) and Gluckman (1941). Covered in Barnes, Colson, Cunnison, Holleman, Mitchell and Watson (unpublished).

*Historical Sociology*: Barnes (1954); Gann. More work required.

*Economics*: Allan and others; Deane. Much more work required.

*Political Structure*: Several studies by Barnes, Colson, Cunnison, Gluckman, Holleman, Mitchell, Richards, Watson, the Wilsons: require studies of Ila, Bisa, Congo Lunda, Tumbuka.

*Kinship Studies*: Several studies by above authors: some tribes require studying.

*Law*: Epstein; Gluckman (1943 and 1955); Holleman (1952).

*Ritual*: Articles by Brelsford (various), Gluckman (1949), Holleman (1953), Marwick, White (various). In preparation, full studies by Turner and M. Wilson.

### SOCIAL CHANGE

*Effects of Labour Migration on Social Life*: Richards (1939), Read (1942), Barnes (1951*b*, 1954); Watson (unpublished); Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (in preparation).

*Effects of Cash-cropping*: Allan and others (1948); Colson (various), Cunnison (unpublished).

*In Tribal Politics*: Barnes (1948*b*, 1954); Colson (1948*a*); Mair; Mitchell (1949*a*). More publication required.

*In Kinship*: Several.

*Urban Studies*: G. Wilson (1941-2); Epstein; Mitchell (various): more required.

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This bibliography contains only items selected because they deal in a professional manner with the problems discussed in the text. The many important but discursive books by travellers, administrators, missionaries, and so forth, on the region, are not listed, nor are the valuable runs of Government departmental reports. I. Schapera, *Select Bibliography of South African Native Life and Problems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941) includes an annotated list of literature on Southern Rhodesia up to 1938. Later important books and articles on the Shona are listed in the essay on these peoples in Colson and Gluckman (editors), *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951). The essays in this book also include complete bibliographies on the Barotse, the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia, the Bemba, the Fort Jameson Ngoni, the Nyakyusa-Ngonde and the Yao. An excellent annotated bibliography on the Fort Jameson Ngoni and related peoples is published by Barnes in *Politics in a Changing Society* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1954).

Bibliographies on all the peoples of the region, some of which are annotated, are contained in *The Ethnographic Survey of Africa*, published by the Oxford University Press for the International African Institute. This survey summarizes data up to the date of going to press; some unpublished material is contained in them. The relevant volumes are:

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# PERPETUAL KINSHIP: A POLITICAL INSTITUTION OF THE LUAPULA PEOPLES<sup>1</sup>

by  
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## I

IN some societies, the various relationships in which a person is involved can be readily allotted to their respective spheres in social life—domestic, political, economic and so forth; these relationships are organized in specific, differentiated institutions. This is broadly true for those complex societies in which specialization of social roles has reached extremes, even though one man can occupy more than one social position and fulfil more than one social role. But analyses of smaller-scale African societies have shown difficulty in unravelling the various specific strands involved in undifferentiated relationships. Institutions appear as 'total' social phenomena, and the relationships expressed through them may contain perhaps political, kinship, economic and religious elements at the same time. The descriptions of peoples like the Tallensi and the Nuer have shown this interpenetration of institutions to a high degree. Among the Tallensi political, religious and unilineally-reckoned kinship units to a great extent coincide. The ways in which Nuer identify a political area with a lineage, and visualize their political life in kinship terms, are main themes of Evans-Pritchard's study.<sup>2</sup>

But Tallensi and Nuer are both 'stateless' societies, without traditional, instituted positions of authority; to counter the lack of a governmental hierarchy, the political organization works through all the men of the society equally in their capacity as members of its component groups. When we come to consider states or societies under chiefs—and most Central African societies are of this kind—it might seem that the elements in the social life ought to be more readily distinguishable. Here it is obvious that political power lies in the administrative hierarchy. The political structure is a balance of the various parts in the hierarchy, while a system of checks prevents undue exercise of power at its apex or elsewhere. Thus demarcated, the political sphere in states is readily contrasted with the sphere of domestic kinship: this, among

<sup>1</sup> Based on field notes collected 1948–51 for the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Professor M. Gluckman and Dr. V. W. Turner were kind enough to comment on the typescript. Dr. E. Colson helped greatly in discussing my field material on this institution.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fortes, *Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*.

Central Africans, comprises for the most part the small lineages within which interpersonal relationships obtain. These lineages, matrilineal and of shallow depth as most of them are, provide fixed groups of kin for those born to them; and each individual has in addition, according to the chances of his own life, the various other kindred whom he also treats on an interpersonal basis.

Although for the Nuer—which I take since it is the classic exposition of this point—kinship and political systems interpenetrate, Evans-Pritchard pointed out that there is an objective difference, recognized by the Nuer themselves, between the kinship which is 'political' and the kinship which is 'domestic'.<sup>1</sup> He distinguished the former by the name 'agnation', since the Nuer are patrilineal. The relevant aspect of the distinction can be briefly stated. Domestic kinship involves the recognition of all genealogical steps between the peoples concerned, with full account of female links and of generation differences. The links connecting two people are traced step by step and appropriate kinship terms are used to describe the exact way in which they are related. Each person thus has a different set of relationships in the area of domestic kinship. In agnation, however, it is a question of links between groups, lineages, rather than between individuals. Groups related in the agnatic clan are described as brothers to each other; and a man ranks as a brother to the member of another group only by virtue of the relationships existing between the two groups. The groups themselves are articulated into a system which, by the balance of homologous parts, maintains the society's equilibrium and prevents total disruption without further aid from specifically political institutions.

Most Central African peoples have traditional instituted political authorities; these are nowadays buttressed by the British Administration, for they are the channel through which the Administration acts and through which its power flows. But in addition to this political hierarchy, there are found also relationships of group to group within the state, which arise directly from the domestic kinship system, and which are themselves expressed in a kinship idiom. These relationships are distinct on the one hand from the specifically political governmental institutions, and on the other from the specifically domestic kinship institutions; but they contain elements of each. They arise by means of 'perpetual relationships' which exist between inherited names of the leaders—and others—of Luapula lineages. Perpetual kinship exists also among the Yao of Nyasaland, and positional succession, upon which it depends, has been described notably for the Bemba of North-Eastern Rhodesia and the Wambugwe of Tanganyika.<sup>2</sup> There is thus evidence that

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> See J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*; A. I. Richards, 'Some Types of Family Structure amongst the Central Bantu'; and R. F. Gray, 'Positional Succession among the Wambugwe'.



the institution may be widely distributed in eastern Central Africa. This account, which is of necessity shorn to the length of an article, describes in a formal way the mechanism of perpetual kinship in the Luapula valley ; shows its relationship to positional succession and to features of Luapula kinship terminology ; and indicates the social spheres in which it operates. A general study of Luapula social organization which is in course of preparation will give more ethnographic data and a fuller assessment of the institution's structural implications.<sup>1</sup>

## II

To clear the way, I mention first certain types of relationships with which perpetual kinship should not be confused. A person is born into his mother's clan. This is the clan from which a successor will be found for him on his death. At the same time, he is a member of his father's (i.e. father's mother's) clan. To the members of this clan as a whole he is in the relationship of 'son', and the members of this clan are all 'fathers' to him, the appropriate kinship terms being used in address. He is, moreover, a member of his father's father's and mother's father's matrilineal clans, and here the relationship terms used are those for grandparents and grandchildren. This feature in itself would not cause confusion, for it does not give rise to permanent relationships between groups of kin. But often by means of this terminology groups are put into father-son or grandfather-grandson relationships. For instance, if a village headman is the 'father' in this sense of another village headman, people may say of the villages themselves, if they are close or have some contact, that the one is 'father' to the other. This usage is furthered by the fact that the village is called by the name of the headman. Perpetual kinship is different also from the traditional brotherhood, involving some obligations of hospitality, which exists between sections recognizing the same clan name.

The institution of perpetual kinship exhibits what happens when the custom of positional succession is carried to its conclusion. Positional succession functions within the matrilineage. On the Luapula, this kin group (called the *cikota*) is a matrilineal group of 4-7 generations from the mother or sister of a man, its original leader (*cikolwe*), whose name thereafter remains linked with it. Members of one matrilineage are for the most part confined to the Luapula valley, although other matrilineages of the same clan may be spread right over the whole area where the clan system operates. Generally the matrilineage comprises the descendants of a group which immigrated to the valley together ; one matrilineage

<sup>1</sup> A first draft of this study, presented as a D.Phil. thesis at Oxford University in 1952, is in the Sir Gilbert Rennie Library, Lusaka.

may be linked to others to form a 'sub-clan'<sup>1</sup> of people who were in close contact before their immigration or who have split apart since their arrival. It is exogamous (as is the sub-clan); its members attend one another's funerals if they are near enough; its elders choose successors to dead members from the other members of the matrilineage. The matrilineage itself is not localized, although there may be nuclei in various places. This is the more to be expected if it owns a village headmanship, for the headman of the village (which is lasting, and seldom moves) always has around him a number of his matrilineage members. The village also contains members of other matrilineages, and these move about as they like from village to village. The clans to which Luapula matrilineages belong number at least forty; in addition, some twenty tribes are represented. Apart from Bwilile and Shila, who were the earliest inhabitants, the residents are all immigrants; and each group retains the tribal name derived from the tribal area from which its ancestors finally migrated to the Luapula valley at the end of their wanderings.

Villagers through their headmen owe allegiance to territorial chiefs; these on the east bank in their turn owe allegiance to Kazembe, the senior chief; but on the western, Congo bank, no senior chief is recognized. There are no land or fishing rights vested in kinship groups, and there is no necessity, economic or otherwise, to force kinsmen to concentrate. The staple is cassava. Shifting, slash-and-burn cultivation is practised only by a few people who cultivate millet.

### III

A man at birth receives a name from either father's or mother's side. This name is known as the 'spirit-name', and is said to be the spirit of a deceased senior relative.<sup>2</sup> As a child passes the age of six or so, he becomes a *muntu* and ceases to be a *malaika*.<sup>3</sup> At this stage he enters the society of men and takes up his own position in it; more strictly, he enters his matrilineage. From now onwards, should he die, his position has to be succeeded to, and his name inherited, by a junior member of the matrilineage. At this early age, succession might take place by the handing of the lad's belt

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Evans-Pritchard's use of the term to distinguish clan segments not genealogically linked, in 'The Political Structure of the Nandi Speaking Peoples', p. 265 f.

<sup>2</sup> Father Stefaniszyn has argued against the general belief that this is held by Africans to imply reincarnation. See his 'African Reincarnation Re-examined'. I only add that on the Luapula, if a man has died and someone has his spirit-name but his position has not been succeeded to, the people say of him: 'So-and-so is dead, but his spirit is here with us.'

<sup>3</sup> Lunda knew this word to be foreign, and for the most part could not translate it. One man however said it meant 'angel', which in fact it means in Arabic.

to a younger brother, and little weight is attached to the matter. But the older the youth who dies, the more important succession becomes. Once he has married, succession is essential, and it is held that serious repercussions follow a breach of this rule. During youth a man may take on different names, and after the birth of children he may be addressed teknonymously. The name which is finally inherited can be any of these names, although it is usually the one by which a man is known at the time of his death. It may, of course, be a name he himself had inherited.

In the case of a married man, the sanctions against failure to find a successor are mystical. The widow is in an unclean state and has to undergo various purifications before she is able to take on her ordinary household tasks again. Especially is she in danger of causing death to the family of any man with whom she sleeps before the ritual of succession has been undertaken, for the spirit of the dead man is jealous that someone not of his matrilineage should have 'removed his dirt' from her body: he is said to kill in vengeance. Although the other purifications are not carried out when a woman is widowed a second time, even then she may not transgress the taboo on sex relations before proper succession.

The widow continues to live in her husband's house. Some months—up to a year—after the death, her family makes overtures to her husband's family to find a successor for her husband. There is argument proportionate to the extent that the wife had been a trouble to her husband during his lifetime, but a successor is always forthcoming when the payment which a widow has to make to her late husband's family is handed over. The succession ceremony itself is in two main parts: the successor sleeps two nights with the widow; and in the morning the fact of succession is made public. Interested people attend and formally lecture the new couple about the new social situation in which they find themselves.

The ceremony is important from more than one point of view. For the widow it ends the period of taboos and re-establishes her as a normal member of the community. For the successor it is promotion into a senior status, that of the man who died. For the matrilineage, it is the act which perpetuates social roles within it. Luapula people lay great stress on the lecturing ceremony which makes public the fact of succession. For it is not only the wives that are inherited—they may be divorced soon afterwards. In addition, some tangible object of the deceased, usually a belt, becomes a sign of the social position he occupied, and therefore it goes to the successor. But more important, he adopts the name, the role and the status which his predecessor had held, and he is often called by the kinship terms which were addressed to his predecessor. Many phrases are in current use to describe positional succession: to take the place, to take the stool, to pick up the name of the predecessor; or *kwingila muli bukantwa*—to enter into (the abstract form of) the name of So-and-so. The correct

term, as among the Bemba, is *kupyanika*. The song, always sung at the ceremony,

*Mutima umo mpyana yama*  
*Fyenka filya ifyali yama*

(One in heart with my uncle, I succeed him ;  
I am just exactly as my uncle was),

also lays stress on the identification of the successor's position with that of the dead man.

The identification is nearly complete, especially if the successor continues to live with the widow. The sons already born to him become known as the sons of (the name of) the dead man, of the position the successor has just occupied ; and future children are similarly known. If a nephew succeeds, his own brothers may now call him uncle. If the dead man occupied an important status position the successor, unless he is a fool, continues to enjoy the respect paid to his predecessor. Many of the names which have been inherited over generations become well known throughout the Luapula valley. It is the names rather than any particular incumbents of them that achieve fame and gain currency in traditions. Present-day incumbents are mentioned with the respect due originally perhaps to a long-dead predecessor.

The status of the new union with the dead man's widow does not fall into the recognized categories of levirate or widow inheritance. In the levirate (in modern anthropological usage) the new husband acts as genitor to children whose pater is the dead man. Widow inheritance, on the other hand, involves a new union and the new husband is genitor and pater to future children. But in positional succession of this kind the new husband is pater only in virtue of the dead man's position, which he occupies. Children are sons of the position, whose mark is the name which is at any time the label of the man occupying the position. Since property never goes from a man to his sons it is not possible to tell from inheritance what the legal position is. Moreover the kinship terms are the same towards father, step-father and step-father by succession. Every living man has a position marked by a name, and when he dies, the position and its name survive. The name comes to be inherited by someone who already has a position : his own, marked by his own name. Thus the man who inherits, embodies two names. Of these the inherited name, being the senior, overrides his original junior name, which may be forgotten in time. Thus children are children of a position and it is the name which marks it that is important rather than its incumbent at any particular time.

One naturally asks how the multiplicity of names of dead people is fitted into the limited number of lineage members alive at once,



The people themselves recognize that names die out (*kuloba*—disappear). In the first place the names of young children are not inherited. Also, a son who is a woman's firstborn, if he is unmarried, is not succeeded to. A more significant reason for the loss of names is the fact that often enough a man succeeds to the position of the bearer of more than one name. When this is so, it is recognized that all the names should eventually be inherited by different people. The ceremony of succession 'brings out' one of the names, usually the most important one; the others are for the time being subsumed in it. If someone suitable can be found later to inherit another of the names, then this in its turn is 'brought out'. But often enough fit successors are not found. In this case, the most important of the names held by one man is the name that survives; it is said to have 'eaten' the lesser names, or that a lesser name has 'entered' a greater name. Again, if at any time a lineage has no suitable male heirs, it may not concern itself with a particular succession, since the name, if inherited by a son for example, would be lost to the lineage. If a name is allowed to lapse in this way, the widow can receive a substitute purification from a magician and this allows her to remarry. Occasionally a name is lost to a lineage although there are possible male heirs. This may occur when a man of strong character makes a son by one wife succeed a son by another wife of a different clan, and is possible only if there is no pressure from local lineage elders. The eventuality seems rare enough.

#### IV

The more important the deceased, the weightier is the choice of a successor. A name which has lasted for generations may be 'owned' by other names of long standing whose duty it is to choose its successor; but normally the choice of a successor is deliberated at meetings of the matrilineage elders of the locality. The ideal successor is held to be a brother—a full brother, or a half-brother by the same mother. Apart from these, any 'brother' is favoured. The terminology is classificatory, and 'brother' (*wesu*) is any relative of the same generation within the matrilineage. Often the succession of an important name goes to a 'brother' in another line of the matrilineage to avoid jealousy; but young unmarried men are usually succeeded by their own brothers. Next to a brother or matrilineal parallel cousin, a matrilineage member two generations down from the deceased is preferred. This relative may be specified as *mwishikulu*, grandson, but in everyday speech he is called by the same term as 'brother' of the same generation—*wesu*. In this way matrilineage members two generations removed are distinguished from the other people in ego's grandchildren's generation, who are never called 'brother', and who always receive the appellation *mwishikulu*. The people say that since a man is

sister's daughter's son to his 'grandfather' he may eventually expect to take his place, and so from an early age he calls his 'grandfather' —'my brother'; and the term is reciprocated. It is true for all in this relationship and not only for the most likely successor. The link here is so intimate that one cannot properly say that the sister's daughter's son is really *mwishikulu* and becomes *wesu* only through

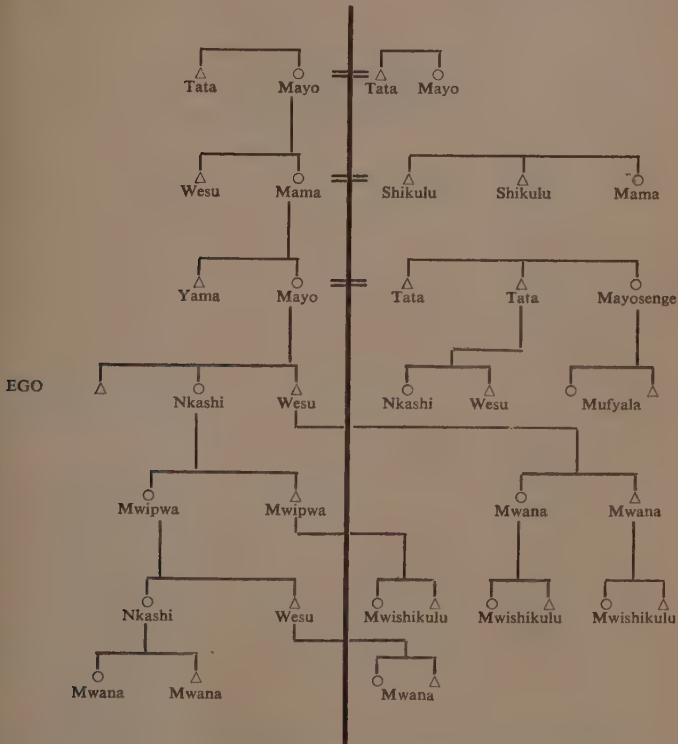


DIAGRAM I : SOME LUAPULA KINSHIP TERMS. EGO'S MATRILINEAGE ON LEFT.

the special position. The relative is *wesu*, and is thereby differentiated from other grandchildren. The fact that all members of the matrilineage can state their relationships with each other in terms of two adjacent generations is very important in the institution of perpetual kinship.

Matrilineage members of alternate generations are known to ego as brothers. Members of adjacent generations are known as uncles

and nephews (*yama* and *mwipwa*).<sup>1</sup> As in the song quoted above, the assumption is generally made that the successor is a sister's son. In fact, people point to the difficulties of this particular kind of succession, and say that a brother, or failing him a 'brother'

TABLE I.

ANALYSIS OF RELATIONSHIPS OF MALE SUCCESSORS TO PREDECESSORS \*

<i>Actual relationship of successor to predecessor</i>	<i>Expressed relationship to predecessor</i>	<i>Actual generation difference</i>	<i>Expressed generation difference</i>	<i>Incidence</i>	<i>Totals</i>
B	brother	—	—	25	37
MZS	"	—	—	7	
MMZDS	"	—	—	1	
MMMZDDS	"	—	—	1	
Others	"	—	—	3	
ZS	nephew	1	1	11	19
MZDS	"	1	1	6	
MMMZDDDS	"	1	1	1	
Others	"	1	1	1	
ZDS	brother	2	—	6	12
MZDDS	"	2	—	3	
MMZDDDS	"	2	—	1	
Others	"	2	—	2	
ZDDS	son	3	1	1	3
Others	"	3	1	2	
ZDDDS	brother	4	—	1	1
					72

\* Included are all instances available from village censuses and matrilineage genealogies where it was reasonable to suppose accurate information.

(*wesu*) two generations down, is better. The succession of the sister's son is difficult because it involves the coming together of two adjacent generations: the successor has to adapt himself to be a 'brother' to members of the generation preceding his own. It is a simple enough matter to accommodate oneself to the relationships held by an elder brother—no changes in terminology are

<sup>1</sup> But a man calls his sister's daughter's daughter's son, 'son', and the reciprocal is 'father'. This does not affect the argument since these terms also imply adjacent generations,

required and few attitude changes. The step up from two generations down, although apparently a great change, involves adjustments which are not severe. The relationship between members of alternate generations is always easy; good-natured banter is the mark of the grandfather-grandchild relationship. This is in contrast with the attitude to his adjacent, senior, parental generation, which includes respect. When succession goes to sister's son, the successor's actual mother's sister ('mother') becomes his 'sister', and his mother's brother younger than the deceased becomes his 'young brother'. The required personal adjustments towards in-laws are even more considerable. Again, if a man has married his mother's brother's daughter he could not succeed to his mother's brother since this would make mother and daughter co-wives, an impossible situation.<sup>1</sup>

Table I shows the relatives who succeeded in 72 instances. No reference is made to the comparatively few successions outside the clan: for where informants could not trace the succession, they did not know if there had been no succession, or if a member of another lineage had succeeded. Out of the 72, 50 or 69.4 per cent were succeeded by those in the 'same-generation' category and 22 or 30.6 per cent by those in a relationship category one generation down. This shows the actual preference for ego's generation and other generations of 'brothers'. It also shows that in spite of the difficulties of adjustment, there is some succession by people one and three generations down. I judge the explanation to be as follows. If a man leaves a widow, the successor should have the ability to look after her and so he should be adult; it is said that for this reason a chosen successor should already have a wife. He should be strong and a good provider. It is not considered peculiar if a young man inherits an old widow, since all point to the practical aspect of it—the widow's maintenance. A successor, moreover, does not necessarily continue to cohabit with the widow, but should help her with food and clothing. Although in view of the wide span of most lineages there is considerable age mixture in each genealogical generation, the majority of the men who are of a suitable age to succeed to an old man belong to his adjacent descending generation; and hence the age structure of the matrilineage is not in sympathy with the preference, other things being equal, that a man in the category of brother should succeed.

Apart from the ability to provide, it is preferable, though by no means always possible, that a position should go to a man who has not so far inherited one. A man who is a strict Christian may refuse to inherit wives, since he feels this is bigamy or adultery if he is already married. It is an advantage to choose someone who

<sup>1</sup> Out of 166 marriages from a census of five villages, 5.6 per cent were with mother's brother's daughter. In spite of the fact that this marriage is held to be undesirable, there were more marriages of this type than with father's sister's daughter (4.2 per cent), a marriage held to be desirable.



already lives nearby in order to avoid the difficulty he would encounter of maintaining two households in widely separated places. Other difficulties may be overcome by separate inheritance of the name and of the wives by different people. It is only in extremity that succession goes outside the matrilineage. For a more important position, the matrilineage still claims it, and at a subsequent succession may attempt to regain it (see, for instance, Makungu I-IV on Diagram II). Other names which have been lost for a generation may be resurrected and 'brought out' anew.

I have described only succession to male positions. Women also occupy positions which are perpetuated, succession going preferably to sister, then to sister's daughter's daughter, then in extremity to sister's daughter. In the case of women again, the sister's daughter's daughter is called 'sister'.<sup>1</sup> The sister's daughter is called 'daughter', there being no equivalent, women-speaking, of *mwipwa* (sister's child). But women hardly ever have the status of *cikolwe*, leader, within the lineage, and it happens less often that a woman's name is inherited through a number of succeeding generations. Moreover, since kinsmen through a female link, being members of the same clan, are already kinsmen, links through women will not have the importance of male links in joining lineages of different clans.

## V

Perpetual kinship arises directly out of this system of positional succession. A perpetual relationship exists between a pair of positions whose names have been inherited through the generations. If, for instance, A was mother's brother to B some generations back, and both names have been continuously inherited, the position of A is still in the relationship of mother's brother to the position of B, and the present-day incumbent of position A is still 'mother's brother' to the present-day incumbent of position B. It is clear that the actual relationship which exists between the present incumbents may be something quite different, since there is always a choice of relationship categories from which a successor can be chosen. A position's relationship with another permanently inherited position is one of its attributes, and is inherited with the name at succession.

We have noted some reasons why, in spite of the inheritance of most names, there are positions which die out. The entering of less important names into more important ones is probably the most significant. My information suggests that most names die out after two or three holders. Those names which do endure are the important ones, those to which historical traditions are attached, or those which had part in the formation of the lineage.

The matrilineage itself has a name. The people of one matri-

<sup>1</sup> But daughter's daughter who cannot succeed, is called 'grandchild'—reciprocal 'grandmother'.

lineage are called by their clan name with the name of the lineage founder, as: the Leopard Clansmen of Kasebula. Although the matrilineage as recited covers 4-7 generations, this is not always a true representation. We show later that telescoping of the genealogy takes place at the top. The matrilineage is not part of a lineage *system*, yet each matrilineage is derived from another lineage of the same clan; and we have no clue how long the process went on between the time of the clan founder and the matrilineage founders. Whether or not the link of a matrilineage with the lineage from which it segmented is remembered, depends upon the amount of movement that has taken place since the segmentation, and upon the possibility of keeping up even sporadic contacts in the present day. It is broadly true to say that splits which occurred within the valley have been followed by continued contact. On the other hand, splits which occurred before the immigrant groups reached the valley may not be remembered if they took place in the very distant past or if the segmenting groups took widely different migratory courses.

The name of the founder, the *cikolwe*, of a matrilineage, is the name which is always inherited and maintained so long as the group is known as the clansmen-of-that-name. If the matrilineage itself later becomes divided—if for instance it has more than one village headmanship and some members reside in one village and some in another—then the headmen's names are both regularly inherited, and a perpetual relationship between them obtains. If the villages are within easy reach of one another, the contact may well be maintained; the villagers may remain members of the same matrilineage, may still recognize the same leader, may continue to hear their affairs and deal with their successions in concert. Settlement of a segmenting group at a distance leads in time to the breaking of ties of intercourse and a gradual gaining of independence by the junior group. One matrilineage becomes two. I express this by saying that they belong to the same sub-clan. But independent as they may be in practical affairs, the known quasi-kinship link of their leaders subsists and prevents a lineage formed in this way from becoming isolated. It remains part of a wider group, the sub-clan.

The continued segmentation of a matrilineage, creating thus a sub-clan of which it is one of the component matrilineages, would not of itself give rise to a system of the kind familiar from Nuer and Tallensi, where a number of lineages together form a larger one, which combine with others to form a still larger one, and so on. Here the end result is not a system: the fact that the leader of the senior lineage embodies an inherited name which marches forward with the genealogy, means that the founder of the senior lineage is a member of the same generation as, or the next ascending generation from, the leader of the segmenting group. The leader of a group segmenting generations later is similarly related to the

founder (now embodied by a person genealogically much junior) of the senior lineage. Two segments, however far apart in time they segment, split off from the same point in the lineage structure. Hence the lineages of a sub-clan are all connected, but are not systematized with newer, shallower lineages inside older, deeper ones : structurally they are of the same order and they are roughly of the same depth.

Perpetual relationships obtaining over many generations within the *same* matrilineage may be few or non-existent, although at all times the lineage contains a number of positions which remain interrelated until one or the other of them dies out. The importance of the system seems to be in the way it maintains links between *different* matrilineages of the same sub-clan ; and also in the way it links together matrilineages of different *clans*, for it works also through affinal and cognatic links.

In the establishment and maintenance of perpetual relationships within the sub-clan, perpetual kinship works along with positional succession and the fact that a relationship between any two males of a matrilineage is a relationship of the same or adjacent generations. I discuss this with reference to the Leopard clan sub-clan of Makungu. This consists of three matrilineages : those of Makungu himself, of Nkambo and of Kasebula. The traditions state that the ancestors of this group came from the west in one migration under the then Makungu. With them also were the people of Nsama, who broke off very early and took a different path to settle in Tabwa country. There is now no link, except a knowledge of common clanship, between them. When they were approaching the Luapula River, Nkambo, who was a sister's son of Makungu, broke off with some followers and settled halfway along the west bank of the river. Makungu settled at the south end of the valley, and contact between him and Nkambo was maintained. After some generations, a sister's daughter of the Makungu of the time left her matrilineage and married at Kazembe, near the north end of the eastern side of the valley. Kasebula, the son she had there, then became leader of his own group of Leopard clansmen and maintained contact with Makungu. But at this time there was no contact between Kasebula and Nkambo, who lived in a fairly inaccessible spot in the swamps. Some time later British guns drove the residents of Kazembe to the swamps, and Kasebula's people sought refuge with Nkambo's, of whose existence they were aware. They were well received and tended during the time of trouble, and close relationships grew up and have continued. Kasebula found that he was 'mother's brother' to Nkambo, and now he uses the appropriate term in address. Moreover the members of the two matrilineages can address one another by the appropriate kinship terms : each person traces his own relationship to his *cikolwe*, and the final link is made by the known fictitious relationship of Kasebula to Nkambo.

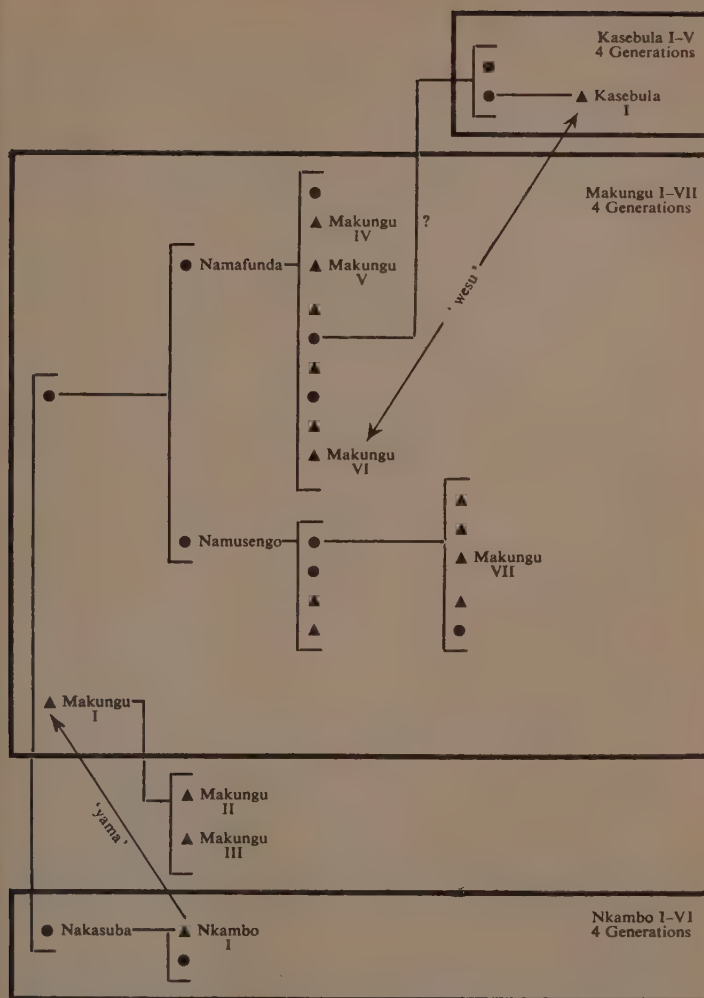


DIAGRAM II: MAKUNGU'S SUB-CLAN, WITH RELATIONSHIPS OF LINEAGE FOUNDERS. EXTRACTED FROM GENEALOGIES OF THE THREE LINEAGE HEADS.

Kasebula becomes 'mother's brother' to Nkambo in the following way. Kasebula and Nkambo seek a link and they find it through Makungu, from whom both originally derived. Nkambo, when early he broke off, was sister's son to Makungu. This is said to



have been Makungu I, although one can never be sure that he was the first.<sup>1</sup> Kasebula for his part, at the time when he became leader, knew that he was sister's daughter's son to the then existing Makungu (who is said to be the sixth after Nkambo broke off). That is, in kinship terminology he was Makungu's young brother. In spite of the fact that the two Makungus concerned were far apart in time, yet they are treated as if they were the same person; and since the first Nkambo was sister's son, and the first Kasebula 'brother' (though actually sister's daughter's son), thus Kasebula is one generation higher than Nkambo. He becomes Nkambo's uncle. Makungu, whether he be first, sixth or *n*th, remains in the same genealogical position in relation to people with whom perpetual relationships were established through the segmentation of his group, at whatever time they broke off. Nor can any subsequent vicissitudes of succession alter the uncle-nephew relationship established between the names Kasebula and Nkambo.

It is thus clear that the names which are inherited in one clan must all be within two successive generations. This is all the more noteworthy, since the matrilineages composing a clan or a sub-clan do not in any other way comprise a systematic network of relationships. The perpetuation of positions of historical importance occupied by living men, and the perpetuation of the relationships between them, go together with the telescoping of matrilineage genealogies to create a degree of balance between the parts of a sub-clan and to fix, as it were at a timeless level, the relationships between them in spite of their difference in antiquity and hence, possibly, in size or political importance. It is remembered which particular matrilineage in a group was the original from which the others segmented, and respect may be given by leaders of junior lineages to the leader of the senior; but the respect does not include acceptance of the senior leader's authority.

Diagram II, showing Makungu's sub-clan, is a composite made from genealogies given me by the three leaders separately. I have shown the sister of Makungu I to have been the mother of Nkambo I as Nkambo claimed, but almost certainly there were other Makungus before that one. But both Nkambo and Kasebula presume themselves to be derived from the first Makungu. Thus also Kasebula today says that the first Makungu was daughter's son of Namafunda. A long time elapsed between the formation of Nkambo's and Kasebula's matrilineages.<sup>2</sup> The Makungu matrilineage may well

<sup>1</sup> For just as any matrilineage leader is 'brother' or 'sister's son' to the head of a sub-clan, so any sub-clan head is 'brother' or 'sister's son' to the head of the group from which he broke off, and so on back to the clan founder (whose name is always remembered). But no genealogy shows precise links beyond the sub-clan level, nor do histories give a clue to the number of generations which passed.

<sup>2</sup> Nkambo was settled early in the valley, before the arrival of the Bemba under Nkuba, for Nkuba, according to both their histories, found him in position. There is reasonably good evidence from Burton's *Lands of Cazembe*

—although one cannot say for certain—be very old. Nevertheless the genealogies give approximately the same depth to each matrilineage. Makungu gave 4 generations from Makungu I to Makungu VII (in 1951; he was of great age and the last survivor of his generation; and I presume him to have died and to have been succeeded 2 generations down, giving 6 generations between Makungu I and Makungu VIII). Nkambo gave 4 generations from Nkambo I to Nkambo VI (the present) while Kasebula gave also 4 generations from Kasebula I to Kasebula V, the present. The extant genealogies are of course longer, since the mothers of Kasebula and the first Nkambo are included while 2 or 3 generations of youngsters are emerging. The equal depth of these genealogies, taken together with traditions which are a rough guide to the time element, is almost enough to show the telescoping of generations. Moreover, the people do not remember all the incumbents of the positions, and one might also suppose that some of these have been dropped out. But an actual impossibility can be demonstrated in the extract from the genealogy of Nkambo (Diagram III). Nkambo arrived before about 1700 (see footnote below).

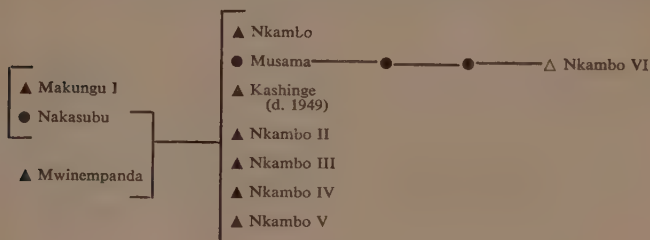


DIAGRAM III.

Now a brother, by the same mother, of the first Nkambo according to the genealogy Nkambo gave me, is a man who died in 1949. Granted he was very old and had remembered well the visit of Livingstone (1867–8), still the genealogy is impossible, and it shows that generations between the first Nkambo and this man have been

that the Lunda were there by 1740. Nkuba's genealogy gives three chiefs before the arrival of the Lunda, so it is reasonable to state that Nkambo could not have segmented and reached the Luapula after 1700 and perhaps did so very much earlier. Kasebula's tradition suggests that Kasebula's name arose first at the death of Kazembe VII (about 1868) whom Livingstone visited—this was when Kasebula first got a village. Kasebula's mother was married for a short time to a Kazembe, which fits in with a woman in the genealogy of Makungu claimed by him to have gone away as wife to Kazembe. The first Kasebula is said also to have taken a prominent part in the negotiations with the British in the 1890's. Even if this were not the first Kasebula, it is still true that Kasebula could not have arisen before the arrival of the Kazembes, and the difference in the ages of the matrilineages is still considerable.

omitted. Again, this same tree shows us that the mother of this man and of the first Nkambo was married to Mwinempanda (and the present Nkambo still calls the present Mwinempanda his father). Mwinempanda, however, is one of the aristocrats who came with Kazembe and the marriage could not have taken place before the Lunda arrival about 1740. This means either that the woman Nakasuba was not the mother of the first Nkambo, for Nkambo existed before the Lunda arrival, or else that she was not married to Mwinempanda. It is more likely that Mwinempanda generations later married a woman who had taken the name of Nakasuba. In any case the genealogy is false and omits some higher generations. The telescoping appears more clearly in some lineages, particularly of the Bwilile and Shila tribes, which are of long standing in the valley and are associated with land ritual. Here there is a proliferation of siblings in high generations—one genealogy gives nine sons of the same mother to have been the first nine incumbents of the name Kalapwe.

One would expect a priori that if telescoping took place it would do so for the remote periods. One supposes Kasebula's tree, of his fairly new lineage, to be nearer the truth than those of long-established lineages like the other two. But even at this comparatively early stage in the formation of Kasebula's lineage, the name of Kasebula and the few others that have been perpetuated with it belong to their own time milieu. The positions are in the relationship of brothers and uncles of living people; but at the same time they are associated in historical thought with the earliest days of the lineage: they are close to the source, Makungu. This attribute of perpetuated names has a special interest owing to the vividness with which the Luapula peoples see their past.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

Our discussion so far has centred on the institution working within the sub-clan. It appears to function there mainly in maintaining direct relationships between the groups and allowing group members to place themselves readily in kinship relationships to each other. From this aspect it works to extend one of the matrilineage attributes: clansmen of other sub-clans are known simply as 'brothers', but the perpetual relationships between matrilineage leaders allows the people under them to trace detailed genealogical relationships through the known link at the top. But apart from maintaining this link, which might otherwise become lost with distance, the institution seems to have few functions. For the most part these are dispersed non-corporate groups, although they may be concentrated here and there; and they can hardly be called political groups (except in such circumstances as we show later).

<sup>1</sup> This point, and much of the following section, is elaborated in my *History on the Luapula*, chap. III.

But it does prevent the clan from breaking up into disconnected matrilineages, by the fixing of names in unchanging positions relative to one another in the clan structure, and it assists in the stabilization of the lineage at a particular depth. In the total social structure, the institution becomes more important when seen on a wider screen, for kinship is perpetuated also between matrilineage leaders and other important men of different clans.

A common event in the valley's past has been for a group of tribesmen to immigrate, perhaps seeking protection from, or giving military aid to, the chief Kazembe. Kazembe would grant the leader a piece of land on which to build a village. From this village, various relatives who gathered followers might break off to form their own villages, close by or far away. The new headmen would have their relationships—whether brother, son, or brother-in-law—with the original headman perpetuated as they were succeeded, and links in this way grew up across the matrilineal ones. Mitchell states for such a relationship among the Yao: 'This relationship, though phrased in a kinship term and moulded to some extent by the norms of kinship behaviour appropriate to the term used, is in reality political, for it fixes the relative positions of two villages through their headmen.'<sup>1</sup>

The political relationship involved in perpetual kinship is perhaps best seen on the Luapula in reference to two type-situations: the positions of men who have ritual control over neighbouring pieces of land, and the position of the Lunda conquerors vis-à-vis the ritual controllers whom they found there. The land before the Lunda came was divided into small areas among ritual 'owners of the land' who were responsible for the fertility of the fish and game in them. The ritual continued after the Lunda conquest under the same officials. Each such area had as its nucleus part of a matrilineage under its leader, the 'owner of the land'. Each group had, and its leader still recounts, a tradition of its arrival there and of the events which went to the establishment of the status quo with the neighbouring owners of the land. Often fighting was followed by intermarriage and a ritual act marking the settled boundary. As a result of the marriage of one owner of the land to the sister of another, the successor to the second might have been the son of the first. Hence a father-son relationship might be established between the two owners, a relationship which is held today by their successors.

Here the formal history goes hand in hand with the device of perpetual kinship. The known relationship of the two owners is a present-day witness to the historical events which brought the relationship about; and conversely the historical events recounted in an unchanging form year after year vouch for the expressed relationship and for the political position of the one owner in relation to the other. The events recounted on these occasions

<sup>1</sup> Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 122.



appear, from the way in which they are told, to have happened only yesterday; for the relationship becomes retrospective, and any incumbent of the one line of chiefs is described as father to any incumbent of the other. Moreover the chief who tells the history does not distinguish between the various incumbents of his name, but refers to them all in the first person singular. The kinship terminology puts the whole lineage into two generations and takes no account of the passage of genealogical time. In the same way, the recounting of history, as it were by the very person who enacted it, takes no account of the passage of historical time. In the kinship system, the perpetuated names belong both to the present and the past. They belong to the present, for the names themselves, the positions in the genealogy, are in the relationship of brother or uncle to living lineage members; and they belong to the past because they are at the same time the genealogical ancestors of the group. In the histories, the incumbents of the names in the same way belong both to the present and the past. They belong to the present because, in the histories, they recount in the first person to their listeners the actions of all the incumbents of the name; and they belong to the past because they speak not only of themselves, but also of the ancestors, whose actions created the present situation.

Relationships, mostly of the father-son variety, were established in similar fashion between the conquering Lunda and the ritual leaders, upon whom the Lunda chief, Kazembe, continued to depend. Often the Lunda governor of a district married the sister of the owner of the land, and their son became the next owner; a permanent kinship link, more apt to the situation than the mere exercise of power, was forged and maintained in this way. The most important of all the Shila, Nkuba, who controlled much of the valley before Kazembe's arrival, in this way became the 'son' of Kalandala, the Lunda governor overseeing Nkuba's own district. The marriage took place about a century ago, and today, although Kalandala no longer has the role of governor, the two remain in close contact and Nkuba still calls Kalandala 'my father'.

## VII

Luapula perpetual kinship thus operates in two different kinds of situation. There is firstly the situation in which its political aspect is evident. Thus among neighbouring owners of the land it is a part of the mythological charter of the rights which the owner holds as against his neighbour. Kazembe himself shows interest in these, for he also is concerned in the fertility and well-being of his land and trusts the rightful ritual officials to maintain it, and at all times owners of the land act as consultants to Kazembe over matters affecting their land. Again, the relationships set up between the dominant Lunda and their subject tribes are manifestly

political. Finally, villages interrelated by perpetual ties are sometimes in clusters, and in one instance are represented by their own sub-chief under Kazembe.

But, as shown in the main part of this brief account, the institution as it exists within the sub-clan is in many cases not related to any other specifically political aspect of life; the groups set into permanent relationships are not corporate groups (unless one counts the few groups of Shila of the same sub-clan who are concerned in land ritual); the members are dispersed and they never come together; and their formal interactions concern mainly events which arise from the institution itself, such as informing each other about deaths and perhaps lending advice about successions. In addition to this, the sub-clan is the widest group that is strictly exogamous. Thus it might appear that the relationships exist only in order to maintain themselves. The related matrilineages have no land-rights to defend, no ancestors to worship in common, no privileges to uphold. But, nevertheless, although the institutions are not directly political, they have political implications: for while relationships are expressed in an interpersonal way, yet the total effect is the permanent relationship of group to group rather than of individual to individual, because of the permanent and unchanging nature of the link through the apices. There is perhaps more informal than formal interaction between related groups, in spite of the distance there may be between them; but here it is individuals who act because of the relationships obtaining between their groups. The links are used as if they formed an extension of real kinship ties, as if they widened the matrilineage into which a person is born. This is an important aspect when account is taken of the amount of migration in the past and in the amount of village-to-village movement in the present. In both situations the extension of kinship has advantages. Informal visiting goes on, and a linked matrilineage may provide a welcome shelter in the extensive travels which Luapula peoples undertake in their everyday business. But there are many other ways in which the range of kinship is extended and put to use, and hence the main significance of perpetual kinship and its cognate institutions appears to be in the maintenance of inter-lineage links, which are in themselves a value, and which reflect the stability of the sub-clan's structure. This structure comprises the links between component lineages.

We began by distinguishing specifically political and specifically kinship institutions, and showed their interpenetration in stateless societies; for African states, the governmental and domestic systems were distinct, and the existence within states of inter-lineage linkages—although they did not create a lineage system—seemed difficult to place. But we found that some lineage relationships, since they involved situations in which the supreme political authority had an interest, were themselves political. On the other hand, the relationships established between dispersed, non-corporate, landless

matrilineages seemed to have no direct political bearing. But perpetual kinship is not the only institution among the Luapula peoples which involves permanent relations between various of its component non-corporate groups. I have already described the almost 'symbiotic' relationship among component tribes in the valley in the field of custom.<sup>1</sup> The clan joking relationships, of a general type familiar from literature of the area, also fall into this category. In political life, these institutions all have the same general function, namely the perpetuation of set relationships between group and group within the state. The groups interrelated by one institution cut across different groups interrelated by others. These institutions taken together supplement the power in the specific institutions of government in maintaining the polity, composed as it is here of parts whose origins are greatly diverse. Specifically, perpetual kinship in doing this widens the area of interaction and brings to bear the fiction of close kinship in favour of overall peace.

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<sup>1</sup> See my article, 'A Note on the Lunda Concept of Custom', for some account of this institution. The word 'symbiotic' is not used strictly in Nadel's sense (*The Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 179) since not all of the component tribes are necessarily involved in it.

# ARCHIVES AND THE STUDY OF SOCIETY <sup>1</sup>

by  
L. H. GANN

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE study of archives is an important one. It has, however, been confined up to now to a relatively small circle of scholars, for the investigation of the form and arrangement of archives has been regarded as the preserve of archivists and the use of their contents as the historian's. But the field merits wider attention, especially on the part of sociologists and social anthropologists, and it is the aim of this article to provide a brief introduction to research workers engaged in the study of society.

What are archives? They are the written, undying memory on which all the more highly developed organizations are dependent if they are to function efficiently. In primitive societies they did not exist, for then men depended entirely on oral tradition to preserve their collective experiences which were embodied in heroic tales, genealogical accounts, legends and so forth. Fact was, however, always liable to change into fiction; and fiction became socially accepted fact, whilst tradition changed, together with the social environment that produced it.<sup>2</sup> The invention of painting made an important contribution to the art of storing experiences. Whether used for magical or didactic purposes or both, rock-paintings gave permanence to the artist's observations. Their range, however, was very limited. The decisive change came with the evolution of writing which made it possible to record an unlimited variety of subjects at will; men ceased to be dependent on the powers of recollection possessed by any one individual and organized institutions could assume a different character. Society gradually became capable of accumulating information acquired in the distant past and preserving it accurately. Bureaucratic administration, defined in Max Weber's brilliant analysis as 'the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge',<sup>3</sup> could at last come into existence. This was of course a slow process. Many of the earlier administrative institutions lacked permanence, preserving little or

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the Chief Archivist of the Central African Archives, Mr. V. W. Hiller, O.B.E., for his permission to publish this article, as well as to my present and former colleagues for their comments and criticisms.

<sup>2</sup> I. Cunnison, *History on the Luapula: An Essay on the Historical Notions of a Central African Tribe*, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute Paper No. 21 (1951).

<sup>3</sup> M. Weber, 'The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organization: An Ideal-Type Construction,' *Reader in Bureaucracy*, ed. R. K. Morton *et al.*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois (1952), p. 27.



nothing of their written material. Gradually, however, they expanded and began to accumulate archives, that is to say documents drawn up or used in the course of an administrative or executive transaction of which they had formed a part and preserved in official custody for future reference.<sup>1</sup> Administrative acts, decisions and rules were formulated in writing to an ever-growing extent and the papers then very slowly passed out of the ownership of the official responsible for their creation. Instead they became the property of an impersonal department, and the combination of records with the continuous organization of official functions formed the bureaucratic 'office'.<sup>2</sup> On their accumulated records the departments possessed a memory that was much longer and more accurate than that of the wisest councillors of antiquity, and as a result their operations assumed a continuity previously unknown. The new offices could also assume tasks of much greater complexity and their operations could be accurately checked. Administrators acquired strictly defined spheres of competence, becoming far more closely accountable to their superiors than before. Provided the transactions of a department were accurately recorded and efficiently filed, any qualified man could now take over the direction of an organization at any time. The members of the administration could be trained more easily and rapidly and could be posted from one part of the country to another, so that affairs could be run with relative uniformity over large areas. Administration became predictable and impersonal. The knowledge derived from records led to greater efficiency and administrative organizations became capable of a greater degree of specialization of labour and of long-term planning. Official records therefore not only reflected, but also influenced, the growth, the expanding activities, and the structural changes of administrative offices. As a result they played an important part in the social process.

But sociologists have shown relatively little interest in archives up to now, leaving the study of the form and organization of official documents to archivists. This omission is an unfortunate one. The modern world is after all to a great extent the creation of bureaucracies and its problems cannot be fully understood without a knowledge of the way in which the great administrative machines function and of the manner in which their 'memories' work. A wide field thus remains open to future researchers, and sociologists must become more conscious of the role and evolution of official records.

## II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHIVES

The Greek city-states already preserved material recording their official transactions, but their archives were very limited in scope.

<sup>1</sup> See H. Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1922) p. 11; also *Committee on Departmental Records Report*, Cmd. 9163, H.M.S.O., London (1954), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> M. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Most ancient cities were small and there was little administrative specialization. Most important men knew one another; and considerable sections of the population shared in political privilege and took some part in the conduct of public affairs, so that a great deal of administrative work was carried out by amateurs. The role played by individual government departments or their equivalent was small. Official archives thus did not begin to be formed in the registries of individual offices, but derived from the centre. They started with the publication of laws, treaties, oracular pronouncements and other matters affecting the citizenry as a whole. In Athens this material was at one time preserved in the council-house on the market-square after it had ceased to be current. Later, in the fourth century, a main depot came into being in the temple of the Great Mother. This contained the laws and the resolutions of governing bodies. Criminal cases also were recorded, since civil cases were considered to be only of a private character. The public records, interestingly enough, also comprised copies of the great dramas which were thought to concern the polity as a whole. The basis of the whole collection consisted of copies of outgoing material, selected for their public importance. There were no 'secret files' and private persons, such as orators and sometimes historians, were able to make copies for themselves. The archives were administered by state-scribes, but the actual arrangement of archives was done by slaves. Individual offices also preserved some records, but these were of much more limited importance.<sup>1</sup>

The archives of ancient Rome followed a similar pattern at first. The state documents, such as public treaties, were formerly exhibited in public. Later they were housed together with the public treasure. The records which were thought worth keeping consisted primarily of outgoing material which was preserved at the centre. In addition individual offices also accumulated some material which was more varied in its nature. In the course of time, however, there were great changes. Rome, from being a small country town developed into the centre of a vast empire, drawing taxes, food supplies and certain luxury goods from the entire Mediterranean basin and beyond. Administration became an art and this depended on the written word. Already from the end of the Republican period onwards the private notes of state officials regarding public transactions began to take on an official character and were deposited in the archives. Important state documents were carefully preserved in a special depot and later a new office came into existence. This was called the tabularium and originated from the Imperial State Council and the Imperial Chancellery which despatched the Emperor's orders and received the reports of generals and provincial

<sup>1</sup> See A. Brenneke, *Archivskunde, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des europäischen Archivwesens*, ed. W. Leesch, Leipzig, Koehler und Amelang, Leipzig (1953), from which much of the historical material concerning the earlier period has been extracted.

governors. In the tabularium high officials were now able to consult a great variety of documents, including past correspondence, Imperial judgments, protocols of important negotiations and material regarding land and survey matters. The Roman Empire also possessed provincial archives, but even the highly developed Roman state machinery did not evolve a unified archival administration, independent of other departments.

This complex administration did not last. The Roman economy, based to a considerable extent on inefficient slave-labour and incapable of supplying the countryside with manufactured goods, began to decline. Economic and political power gradually shifted from the cities to the countryside and it became ever more difficult to resist the infiltration of barbarians who mastered or even improved upon Roman military techniques. The Roman state machinery gradually disintegrated and with it disappeared most of its records.

Only the Church survived as a great international organization and carried on many of the older administrative techniques; the Papal Chancellery and system of preserving records were based on the Roman model. Individual princes might die, but the Papacy went on for ever, served by full-time officials who were all literate and included the most learned men of the age. The Church built up an organization administering great landed estates and capable of collecting revenue from the faithful of all Western Christendom. The Popes moreover wielded great spiritual powers capable of intimidating all but the most brazen. This great organization once more depended on the preservation of records which gave the Papacy an artificial memory infinitely longer than that of any ordinary ruler. Already in the seventh century there was a department of papal archives in the Lateran. This was closely linked to the Papal Chancellery, comprising charters and correspondence about ecclesiastical matters, letters and accounts dealing with the administration of the patrimonium, and registers of outletters. The head of the Chancellery administered the archives as well as the library which constituted a spiritual armoury of inestimable value for the conduct of the dogmatic struggles in which the Papacy was involved.

As the volume of correspondence grew greater and more and more records accumulated, the link between Chancellery and archives loosened and in the thirteenth century archives and library became independent of the Chancellery. The early secular magnates possessed nothing comparable to this. They were at first incapable of building up a permanent state organization or of maintaining a large retinue at a fixed residence. They had to travel about their scattered dominions, living off their estates, and their records followed them. Most of their records got lost, and government largely had to rely on memory, aided by impressive ceremonial.

Gradually, however, all this changed. The productivity of Western Europe increased and its economy became capable of

maintaining a larger number of specialists. Money circulated more freely and there were now many more goods which it could buy. Permanent administrations came into being, staffed at first by learned churchmen, and subsequently more and more of secular men trained in the law. These gradually acquired greater expertise. In England, for instance, a professional Chancery and a more specialized financial and legal administration grew out of the Royal Council and these developments were reflected in the quality of the records. In earlier days the kings had used comparatively simple instruments: charters which bestowed lands and privileges on the Church and on landed magnates, and writs which gave instructions to shire courts. But gradually government developed more complicated types of correspondence, and from the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries there was a great administrative revolution affecting most of Western Europe. In England systematic copies were made of all outletters of importance from the reign of King John onwards, and this development marked the beginning of deliberate archive-making on a larger scale. The material was preserved on parchment membranes, stitched skin to skin in a continuous roll and then rolled up. Beginning as a simple, undifferentiated roll for many kinds of documents, the series rapidly developed into a number of specialized ones. Other innovations were made in the legal and financial departments which acquired a similar professional skill in recording information, and by the end of the thirteenth century all the major activities of government had come to rest on a written basis.

As a result the continuity and reliability of administration increased considerably. The administrator was able to make more and more use of the experiences of his predecessor and all decisive action was now preceded by injunctions to search the rolls. Administration became more impersonal and predictable. At the same time, it has been argued, the development of bureaucracy slowed down the rate of administrative change, by imposing serious limitations on the unfettered initiative of later English medieval kings.

Nevertheless, the importance of all these changes should not be overestimated. The medieval state records were still limited in their scope. The central administration was still primarily concerned with the king's dealings with the great landed magnates, the Church and the cities, and with raising revenue and punishing criminals. The unfree largely went unrecorded and so, except for taxation, did the freemen. The 'man in the street' generally only came into the documents produced by the central administration as a debtor or as a criminal.<sup>1</sup> In this respect the position of a medieval peasant was comparable in certain ways with that of an

<sup>1</sup> V. H. Galbraith, *An Introduction to the Use of the Public Records*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1934). For the medieval period also see the excellent *Studies in the Public Records*, Belson & Sons, 2nd ed., London (1949), by the same author.



African peasant under an administration such as that of the British South Africa Company in Rhodesia, concerned with the employers rather than the employed.

Medieval correspondence also possessed other limitations. It was highly formalized and was greatly limited in volume. All documents had to be laboriously copied on expensive parchment; considerable trouble had to be taken over proper authentication and the use of seals, whilst trained scribes were few in number and expensive to maintain. The medieval records are, moreover, poor in reliable statistical material, so that a medieval state could not plan ahead with any great degree of accuracy. Finally the state machinery worked only very slowly. Time was of little value, and though the later medieval record-keeper usually kept his material in good physical condition, he did not provide it with an efficient system of indexing and other aids to finding documents. A search for a single document might thus take many days and there was constant delay in the work of government.

Gradually, however, the medieval state was transformed. The expansion of trade, mining and small-scale manufacturing industries changed the balance of economic power over much of Europe. The power of the great semi-independent magnates, relying on armed retainers, and of autonomous cities, depending on the strength of their walls, disappeared alike. The national wealth of many Western European countries expanded; states were able to raise more revenue and support larger establishments. Moreover new professional classes of people came into being who were not linked to the Church and who provided recruits for expanding administrations. The state machinery thus became more efficient. Many states improved their fighting services beyond recognition and developed a rational and continuous foreign policy designed to complement their armed might. At the same time they built up a much improved tax-gathering apparatus and commonly attempted to institute some kind of central control of economic policy, so as to increase their taxable potential. As a result of all this more and more had to be put down in writing. Instead of the highly formalized products of medieval chancelleries there was now a flood of new documents such as inletters, outletters, drafts, reports, schedules, proceedings of boards and many others. Documents could thus no longer be registered by making a copy or précis of the documents that were despatched or received. Though administrators now often neglected older material, they developed more complex aids in recording the archives and better methods for storing the new records. As early as 1571 a German writer was able to speak of the registry as the third 'regime' of the state, comparable in standing to the financial administration and chancellery,<sup>1</sup> and in 1578 a State Paper Office was set up in England,

<sup>1</sup> H. O. Meisner, *Urkunden und Aktenlehre der Neuzeit*, Koehler und Amelang, Leipzig (1950), p. 8.



containing administrative correspondence of the Secretary or Secretaries of State. At the same time more determined attempts were made to check the tendency on the part of state officials to retain their official papers at home, a practice which was very slow to die. As official papers accumulated, current records soon had to be separated from non-current material, and in the course of the seventeenth century the archivist commonly became independent of the registrar.

The archivist was still not regarded as the servant of the public. He might be employed to guard the muniments of a great landed magnate, the documents that 'defend their owner's claims to possessions and inheritance against others'. He might be the servant of a city or, more often, that of an absolutist monarch. In that case his sole function was service to the Prince and he had to preserve the treatise and correspondence that strengthened the dynastic and economic claims of his master, record precedents and so forth. He was always an administrative official or a legal man, never a historian. Archives were indeed occasionally used for the purposes of historical research, but normally their contents were regarded as secret and closed to outside investigators. The subject of an eighteenth-century prince, unlike a Greek citizen, had no right of access to the state records. These were in the keeping of a professional bureaucracy whose position depended—to some extent—on the undisputed control of its records, the importance of which was perhaps sometimes exaggerated by classifying innocuous material as secret.

From the end of the eighteenth century onwards the position of both archivists and the collections in their charge began to be dramatically transformed. The French Revolution eliminated the political and economic significance of many documents in official custody and much material was dispersed in the turmoil that followed. At the same time the newly sovereign people claimed control of the state records. In 1790 the Paris National Archives thus came into existence, designed to assume custody over the records arising out of the constitutional acts of the new National Assembly, and serving as a monument to the greatness of the Revolution. Four years later the National Archives became the centre for all state archives. The new institution was intended to keep the records necessary for the administration of confiscated Church and other property, whilst historical material was to pass into the keeping of libraries where it would be open to scholars. 'Feudal' documents, embodying the old order and contrary to the spirit of the new republic, were to be liquidated like their former owners. 'Useless paper' was to serve the cause of national defence as raw material for the munition factories. Fortunately this programme was not wholly carried out and many 'feudal' documents survived. The National Archives developed into the linchpin of the national record administration. They came to supervise the

new departmental archives, created in the course of the administrative reorganization of France. Similar developments also took place in other Continental states where the great territorial changes resulting from the Revolutionary Wars, the collapse of many of the older administrative institutions, and the dispersal of much archival material, made necessary great changes in archival administration.

In England reorganization came a little more slowly, and had to wait until the period of the great Whig reforms. Then the great constitutional reform that enfranchised the urban middle-classes was followed by a spurt of legislation in many fields, which brought to fruition a variety of earlier projects. The new laws included the Public Record Office Act of 1838, a kind of 'archival reform bill', which placed the people's evidences, the court records, under the charge and superintendence of the Master of the Rolls. Later on, departmental records also came to be looked upon as 'public' in character.<sup>1</sup> English local records, on the other hand, remained outside the jurisdiction of the Public Records Office and county record offices only began to come into existence in the twentieth century.

All these new institutions functioned independently of the registries of government departments and were run by highly trained specialists. At the same time the right of access of the public to certain of the state archives began to be recognized. The reason for this development is to be found, not merely in the growth of scientific curiosity, but also in the changing relationship between the state and its subjects. The state, as well as its functions, ceased to be thought of in terms similar to property. It came instead to be regarded as a territorial society, organized as a legal association under a constitution. All the members of this organization were considered as being subject to a common law, enjoying the rights and carrying out the duties guaranteed under that law.<sup>2</sup> It was the task of the public administration to serve this impersonal system of rights and obligations, and it could do this only if it was made a highly professional service from which useless offices and personal patronage were gradually eliminated. The new machine was intended to serve the interests of a much vaster political community than hitherto, a community which thus possessed an active interest in the evidences produced by it. The French revolutionary reformers, for instance, considered that each citizen was entitled to look at the records affecting his property in order to protect his material interests which might be linked to the destruction of old feudal rights. The legal aspect at first also seems to have been foremost in the minds of English reformers. Nevertheless the new archival

<sup>1</sup> See Cmd. 9163, *op. cit.*, and R. C. Jarvis, 'The Public Record Office,' *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 1. No. 1 (1955).

<sup>2</sup> E. Barker, *The Development of Public Services in Western Europe 1660-1930*, Oxford University Press, London (1944), p. 3.

institutions were also of inestimable value to research workers who came to be their primary users in the course of the nineteenth century. During that period the natural sciences made unparalleled advances in penetrating the past of the solar system, of our own earth and the species inhabiting it; and this progress was paralleled by the development of 'scientific' history. For the first time historians began to use administrative records on a large scale; massive collections of historical documents, inventories and calendars were published and the archivist became primarily the historian's auxiliary.

The nineteenth century also saw important changes in methods of arranging documents. Previously many archivists, following the precepts of the 'Age of Reason', had tried to arrange their material according to certain preconceived subject classifications. The nineteenth-century reformers, on the other hand, thought in terms of organic evolution and saw the product of a single department as an entity that had once been alive. They therefore reconstructed the documents in their original order, according to their administrative functions, like paleontologists restoring the skeleton of an extinct animal,<sup>1</sup> thus making a major contribution both to archival science and history.

The twentieth century saw a further great expansion of archival activities. Russia reorganized its archival institutions after the overthrow of the Tsars, and between 1934 and 1935 the United States created their great National Archives. The growth of national consciousness, linked to an increased interest in the national past, also led to the creation of archives in formerly dependent territories. From 1935 Southern Rhodesia, for instance, began to build up a national record office<sup>2</sup> and other British territories in Africa, such as the Gold Coast and Nigeria, followed suit after the Second World War. In addition, great business firms, such as the Ford Motor Company, whose bureaucracies began to rival those of small states in size and complexity, began to build up similar institutions.

At the same time archivists began to be faced by completely new problems. Some of these were of a purely technical nature, such as those concerning the preservation of new types of records, including photographic and sound reproductions, mechanized accounting records and so forth. More important still were the questions arising out of the ever-increasing bulk of documents.

<sup>1</sup> S. Muller, T. A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, tr. A. H. Leavitt, The H. W. Wilson Coy., New York (1940), p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> The Southern Rhodesian records now open to the public in the Central African Archives cover the period 1890-1924 and extend over about three-quarters of a mile. The Native Department records roughly measure 100 ft. and include correspondence of Native Commissioners, The Chief Native Commissioner, reports, circulars, proceedings of Conferences and so forth. The District Court records, which mainly deal with native cases, extend over 200 linear ft.

Formerly a record-keeper was satisfied if he could give physical and moral protection to his archives, and he was content to leave the control of bulk of deposits to the departments. This policy was sound enough as long as the state organization did not attempt to do very much. The state only required a limited number of documents as long as it mainly confined its activities to warfare, foreign policy, the raising of revenue and the keeping of the peace, and as long as social services, in the shape of posts, sinecures and pensions were confined to a small number of privileged groups. The nineteenth century, however, already saw an enormous increase in the number of papers turned out by the state machinery. The influential industrial middle-classes expected public authorities to shoulder certain new functions and to carry out their work with greater efficiency. Moreover the enthusiasm of reformers, pressure from other classes lower down the social scale, and the needs of a society in the throes of urbanization, led to a vast expansion of the social services. This meant that more and more documents were now required for the conduct of affairs. This was made possible by an improved educational system that turned out more clerks, as well as by cheaper methods of manufacturing paper, the exploitation of new timber resources for its manufacture and by new inventions. These, for instance, include the steel pen which took the place of the old fashioned goose quill and helped to produce written documents more easily.

In the twentieth century the flood of official documents became a torrent. This was true in industry as much as in the state administration, and both completely changed their administrative techniques. The invention of the typewriter about 1875 ushered in the mechanization of the office. It was followed by the introduction of accounting machines, devices for the rapid multiplication of documents, including carbon paper, and finally by the installation of electronic equipment. More clerks had to be employed, and women were recruited into offices in ever-growing numbers; and it has been calculated that in the U.S.A. the proportion of clerical to factory workers in industry increased from 1 : 30 to 1 : 3 between 1900 and 1950.<sup>1</sup> These changes were accentuated by structural changes in industry. Smaller firms were frequently ousted by vast corporations with complex organizations. The development of mass production methods made staff work of tremendous importance: work schedules, staff manuals and lengthy instructions had to be printed; and new specialist organizations dealing with market research and sales promotion came into being. All of these produced more records. At the same time legal and even political requirements made it essential to preserve a good deal of material, and sometimes even 'empire building' within a corporation put a premium on the multiplication and retention of files. As a result

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by R. L. Burlew, *Records Management Review*, Vol. IV, No. 5, enclosure I.U.S. Navy Department (1954).



records were produced on a tremendous scale, cluttering up office space and concealing the vital information embodied in them by their bulk.

Much the same development occurred in the government services. The state extended its activities into the social and economic sphere in a way that would have horrified most Victorian civil servants. It required information on an ever-increasing range of subjects and collected more and more written papers. Offices grew in size, writing became a habit, and clerks no longer had to think twice before making a copy of a document. The most trivial transactions could now be recorded, finding their way into different files, and mass production of records sometimes took the place of sound registry procedure. This process was especially strongly marked in the United States where the Federal records increased from 4 to 18½ million cubic ft. between 1932 and 1947 alone.<sup>1</sup> The results of this development were serious. Not only did the physical make-up of the records tend to deteriorate, but the documents as a whole could no longer be housed and it became very difficult to keep track of any particular transaction.

The problems of the research worker also became much more complex. The inflation in the number of documents was followed by a sharp fall in their research value, and this affected government departments themselves when these had to undertake research for their own purposes. An investigator could now no longer plough through all the papers relating to any one particular problem, because there were too many of them. Either he had to content himself with leaving some of them untouched, or else he had to be satisfied with 'knowing more and more about less and less'. At the same time a research worker had to reckon with the possibility that many important decisions were never recorded at all, having been made over the telephone or in the course of a personal conversation following upon a hurried meeting.

These developments greatly affected the archivist's work. He now had to learn how to 'process' vast quantities of paper amounting to many tons. He began to take a more active part in the regular transfer of records from departments to archives, a matter that had originally been left to the departments themselves. In addition he became more intimately concerned with the planned destruction of records. At first this was the responsibility of the originating offices which burnt the files that were no longer required or—more often than not—allowed them to accumulate in old attics and lumber rooms where they gradually deteriorated till the position became unmanageable, space was needed once more, and a general holocaust took place. Conscious planning at first played only a limited part in the selection of the research worker's raw material. Gradually, however, the destruction of records ceased to be left

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Leahy *et al.*, *Task Force Report on Records Management*, Ap.C. U.S. Printing Office (1948).



to chance or to the whims of individuals and developed into a complicated technique which archivists helped to elaborate.

Research workers might object that this is a most undesirable development. Ideally everything should be kept, for no one can foresee the trends of future studies and the danger of biased selection is one that can never be excluded. In practice a policy of keeping everything is out of the question. The governments of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland alone consume 270 tons of paper a year. Even if accommodation could be found for all this material, no one could possibly service it. Destruction is thus bound to take place; and the only criterion that has found universal acceptance, are that the administrative offices which produced the files should decide, largely leaving the wishes of the research worker out of account. Admittedly, this is not as easy as it sounds. Administrative use itself is liable to change, especially in view of the fact that the two World Wars and large-scale planning have stimulated research work on the part of offices themselves, work of which the future trend might not be accurately guessed. The committee or the individual responsible for destruction thus requires not only a knowledge of records and historical integrity, but also a wider and more imaginative grasp. Something depends, moreover, on the man who interprets the official destruction schedule in practice and actually throws the documents into the waste-paper basket. Nevertheless the conscious long-term planning of destruction has come to stay, for it is the only one that makes sense from an administrative point of view and, if properly carried out, it will still guard posterity against the unfair selection of material.

The rapidly growing mass of material also forced archivists to adapt new methods of finding to their use so that they might find their way through the enormous welter of files. Partly as the result of increasing specialization and of the growing volume of business the arrangement of correspondence was changing. In and out letter-books, the successors of the medieval rolls, were disappearing. They were replaced by subject files, the modern version of the ancient hampers or sacks containing a miscellaneous collection of parchments. The development of the file appears to have begun in the highly differentiated Continental administrations and only later spread to England where in and out letter-books were still used during the present century. The new subject files, however, soon became so numerous that they could no longer be relied upon to be self-indexing. The problem of finding correspondence was solved by the invention of the card catalogue. This device constituted the major contribution of the librarian to the world of administration and commerce. It was used in French libraries in the eighteenth century and was introduced for commercial indexing into the Bank of England in 1852.<sup>1</sup> It began to be used widely

<sup>1</sup> T. D. Brown, *Manual of Library Economy*, ed. and revised by W. C. Berwick Sayers, Grafton & Co., London (1930), p. 267.

in offices from the end of the nineteenth century onwards and revolutionized administrative procedure as much as the internal combustion engine influenced methods of transport. The card catalogue proved capable of further great development, changing into the coded punched card. This greatly facilitated the mechanization of finding procedures and the peripheral punched card was recently adapted for archival purposes in Southern Rhodesia.

In recent years archivists extended their activities from 'dead' to semi-current files. In this development most of the pioneering was done by the United States. They were less affected by vast accumulations from the distant past and by a predominantly medievalist bias in the training of their archivists than older countries. Moreover, the problem of mass production of paper that faced them was on an even greater scale than that existing in Europe. The American example was soon followed by some of the younger overseas territories such as Australia and Southern Rhodesia which also created central depots for semi-current material.<sup>1</sup> In these 'Records Management Centres' archivists became responsible for arranging, processing and finding files that would otherwise have cluttered up valuable office space or would have been dumped into strong-rooms to become unusable and finally forgotten. The archivist soon became more familiar with these materials than their owners and therefore developed into a kind of official information officer. He now had to answer enquiries on an ever-widening range of subjects, as administrators tackled an ever greater variety of tasks. In dealing with government departments he was also gradually forced into a position in which he had to educate offices to make effective use of the material they deposited.

This is a task linked to a very much wider problem, that of finding ways and means of sifting and correlating information to enable investigators to find their way through the immense mass of published and unpublished material which accumulated on library shelves all over the world. Everywhere the speed of scientific and industrial advance depends more and more on the ability of book- and record-keeping organizations to make the results of research available. The same is true of administrative progress, for the output of records by government agencies increased faster than the ability of offices to make effective use of them. As a result a good deal of valuable information remains unused, embedded in files and memoranda whose very existence have been forgotten and which have to be reconstituted over and over again at great cost in time and labour.

Finally the archivist is beginning to extend the sphere of his operations into the actual creation of records. In addition to

<sup>1</sup> In the United States the *Federal Records Act of 1950* authorized the setting up of Records Management Centres. Southern Rhodesia followed suit four years later.

being concerned with the preservation of archives, some Records Management Officers have begun to act as advisers in office methods themselves. They are assuming control over the production of records by advising on 'birth-control' methods, by assisting in the manufacture of prefabricated 'form-letters', by introducing better filing systems and various mechanical devices such as micro-film cameras.

As the scope of official records became immensely broader the archivist ceased to be concerned mainly with the need of the historians but became instead an indispensable auxiliary to research workers in many other fields. These included hydrographers, demographers, agronomists and many others, all of whom are now able to make good use of the widely extended scope of official records. At the same time the historian's approach itself is beginning to change in certain respects. This transformation may be linked to some extent to the changing character of the records, the 'raw material' of history. The modern historian can no longer confine his attention primarily to a few straightforward basic series of correspondence or proceedings, illuminating the remainder of the collection, providing its 'backbone' and clearly revealing the bulk of high policy matters. Even in a small colonial territory, policy is now concerned with an immensely larger range of subjects. Important decisions are diffused over a much wider range of documents—the proceedings of boards and departmental committees, reports of enquiry, notes of interviews with representatives of important corporations, and so forth. The student of a present-day colonial dependency for instance can no longer afford to concentrate primarily on the perusal of a simple series of in and out letters containing the communications between the Secretary of State and the Governor. The historian's emphasis is thus frequently changing from preoccupation with high policy matters, as seen from the centre to a more diffuse way of looking at events and a greater interest in social development. As more modern material will become available this movement is likely to accelerate further and present historians with new problems.

### III. ARCHIVES AND THE SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

Whilst many historians are thus tending to think more in sociological terms, sociologists will be able to think more in historical terms, as the relevant material at their disposal will constantly increase. This means that they will have to devote much greater attention to the study of archives which has for long been regarded as the historian's special preserve. Social anthropologists especially will find the new field of considerable value, though they have not paid much attention to it till very recent times. Anthropology began as a library study and anthropologists were at first content to collate and interpret information derived from secondary sources.

Under the inspiration of Malinowski and others, anthropologists then turned to field-work undertaken through the medium of indigenous languages. In doing so they primarily relied on good interviewing techniques and on their field-notes of what they observed of people's actions. This method proved of the greatest value, and was used successfully—not only by anthropologists—but also by a number of historians interested in recent history, leading to an important series of 'oral history programmes', undertaken by American scholars using tape-recorders.<sup>1</sup>

These methods of observation and interview possessed their limitations. They worked very well for the investigation of relatively static societies, such as that of the Trobriand Islanders. But on their own they were inadequate for a full understanding of a society in the throes of a rapid social transformation. Social change is after all a historical process and cannot be understood without an enquiry into the past.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, once the anthropologist turns away from the investigation of a particular society and embarks on the field of sociological generalization he must use historical data. Unlike scientists in most other fields he cannot use the methods of controlled experiment to verify his theories, except in the limited sphere of the internal relationships of small groups. As a result he is forced to turn to history in support of his conclusions, and moreover only history can give to him that sense of the continuity of the social process which he would otherwise lack.

A good deal of work can be done by means of secondary sources. Sooner or later the sociological or anthropological enquirer will find, however, that the use of secondary sources alone is as inadequate a means of studying the past as the use of published travellers' tales for the investigation of a primitive society. He will then turn to primary material, and in doing so, he will find official archives a particularly valuable raw material, possessing certain qualities that distinguish them from other written sources. Unlike books or manuscript material of other kinds, they were not written for literary, historical or other purposes. They accumulated as the natural product of their originating office, constituting as it were 'a moving picture film of the government at work'.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly the use of this film has many limitations. The work of government was not identical with the workings of history, though some men almost seem to have thought so. Moreover, the film is full of breaks. No collection belonging to a department can be completely objective, unless each office had kept each scrap of paper ever written inside it. But this can obviously never happen

<sup>1</sup> V. O. Barnett, 'Can Oral History be Worth While?', *American Archivist*, July 1955, No. 3, pp. 241-55.

<sup>2</sup> See M. Gluckman, *Malinowski's Sociological Theories*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 16, Oxford University Press, Capetown (1949), for a discussion of this question.

<sup>3</sup> W. G. Leland, *Archival Principles*, United States National Archives Staff Information Paper No. 20 (1955), p. 9.



for the administrator is constantly forced to destroy some of his material for one reason or another, documents that might possibly have been of vital importance to subsequent research workers. If no such destruction were carried out, however, there would be neither research nor administration, for both would flounder in an ocean of paper, and in any case, enough usually remains to make the documents of great value. Seen in their organic connection, they serve to elucidate one another as no artificial collection of 'interesting' specimens is able to do. They are also less 'self-conscious' than non-administrative material. The correspondence of an official or the confidential proceedings of a board may conceivably have been written to mislead another office, but they were not normally written with an eye towards posterity. Provided recent archives are not opened to political investigations and confidential proceedings are not—as in some recent instances—published shortly after their conclusion, administrative records, within their limited framework, are generally impartial witnesses about the past.

Admittedly the use of official files on the part of the anthropologists presents many pitfalls. Departmental files were not written for the purpose of making a theoretical analysis or of accumulating information valued for its own sake. They were both guides to and products of administrative action. A European tax-collector in an African colony was thus primarily interested in the question of whether taxes were paid. He was not concerned with the impact of taxation on, say, the indigenous kinship structure. It may even be argued that had he concerned himself too much with questions of that type, his efficiency as an administrator would have been impaired. Furthermore the investigator must remember that a colonial administrator usually worked with certain sets of assumptions which the anthropologist need not necessarily share. The average servant of the British South African Company's administration in Rhodesia, for instance, was normally convinced that the white man's justice was always the best for the blacks. Had he thought differently of African systems of justice, he would hardly have been as keen and efficient an adjudicator as he actually was. The average Native Commissioner was moreover influenced by his own social background. He usually came from a home where women did not perform heavy manual labour, which was left to servants. He was thus not so familiar with a situation found not only in an African village, but also in a late nineteenth-century working-class or peasant-home, where 'woman's work was never done'. This factor must be taken into consideration in judging statements found in early official sources that amongst the Bantu women had to do all the work, and that their social system was founded upon the slavery of women. The same caution must be applied to other sociological observations made by administrators. When evaluating these the enquirer must remember that



the civil servant's framework of thought may differ from his own. A pioneer official who had begun European administration amongst the Lovale in N. Rhodesia thus explained to the writer that there was an obvious link between immorality and the matrilineal kinship organization. The Lovale were so lecherous that no man knew his father with certainty. As a result they had to adopt the matrilineal system. An anthropologist might very well agree with the official's observation but he would not cast the explanation in the same ethical terms.

Finally there remains the question of the bulk and the quality of the records. The observations of early administrative officials on Rhodesian tribes would be of tremendous value in piecing together details concerning native societies as they were fifty years ago. The early Rhodesian administrators lived after all in the closest possible contact with the indigenous people. Then Native Commissioners were usually stationed in isolated outposts, which might often be just a couple of native-style huts; they might live for months without seeing another white man or a white woman. Most of their time was spent touring their districts, where they maintained order by moral and if necessary by physical force. They tramped around with African carriers, hunted, heard formal disputes, and got to know their subjects intimately. Unfortunately men of that type did not usually put down very much on paper, whilst much of what they did write fell a victim to white ants and to neglect owing to poor office accommodation. In any case the range of correspondence was limited. Most of the problems of the administration were concerned with the doings of the small European top-stratum and as long as the native remained peaceable, paid his taxes and obeyed the law, the administration was not very interested in his day-to-day life. There were as yet few technical services affecting the African villager and forcing the Native Commissioner to spend more and more time in his office. Later on all this changed. The administration became more and more complex. The Native Commissioner had to become more educated and more literary-minded, but at the same time he became more and more tied to the office. The volume of correspondence therefore increased and documents were preserved more efficiently. At the same time, however, the direct and informal contacts between the Native Department officials and the indigenous people diminished, and this factor affected the quality of their observations. Another important reservation should be made with regard to the statistical material produced by earlier colonial administration. Much of this was produced by amateurs and all early colonial statistics, such as data concerning indigenous population figures, must be treated with great caution.

Yet even when all this is borne in mind, official sources are still of the greatest value to the investigator. A good example of what can be achieved by the use of original source material may be found

in Dr. J. A. Barnes's pioneer work on the political history of the Fort Jameson Ngoni of Northern Rhodesia.<sup>1</sup> The Ngoni were once a great conquering nation who raided neighbouring tribes to replenish their manpower and cattle, leading a parasitic existence upon other peoples. British conquest completely smashed the military and political structure upon which the Ngoni way of life depended and brought a social revolution of the first magnitude. None of these changes can be fully understood outside a historical setting which is provided by Dr. Barnes through a study of Foreign Office correspondence and other sources. The use of original sources, however limited their scope, is thus indispensable for a broader understanding of changes and will put the evolution of African institutions into a juster perspective than would be gained by field-work alone. Even the most cursory perusal of the Consular despatches written to the Foreign Office from Nyasaland during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when the Territory was coming under European influence, will very quickly dispel any sentimental illusions that in Nyasaland there were stable tribal societies in existence, whose balance was suddenly overthrown by the impact of Western capitalism. Though the records are not easy to evaluate, they do make it clear that there were already vast and sometimes catastrophic social changes in progress before the coming of the white man, and of these the anthropologist must be aware.

Not only indigenous, but also European, institutions can be elucidated through a perusal of official records. Official archives will give some idea of how a government really worked, what its intentions were, how these were modified in process of being carried out, and how the paper structure differed from the actual one. Without records the investigator would find it very hard to grasp the administrative reality behind legal theory, and failure to do so might seriously affect some of his conclusions. According to the constitutional text books—to mention only one example—'indirect rule' through native chiefs was only introduced into Northern Rhodesia in the 'thirties'. From that period onwards 'direct rule' through the Native Department supposedly came to an end and the chief ceased to be merely a 'constable'. But the facts were otherwise. The records of the British South Africa Company's administration in the Central African Archives make it clear that 'indirect rule' always existed from the territory, and this fact cannot help being of interest to the student of chieftainship. The same records will also give help in other directions. Dr. A. I. Richards's studies of the effects of labour migration on the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia can thus be supplemented from material originating with the old North Eastern Rhodesian district administration. This makes it clear that the migration of adult males to distant mining

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society*, Oxford University Press, Cape-town. (1954).

centres was already seriously affecting village life well before the First World War, long before Dr. Richards conducted her investigations.<sup>1</sup>

Another valuable source for the study of social change is to be found in the court records. These—to mention one instance—form the most numerous class of records derived from the early Southern Rhodesian district organization found in the Central African Archives. They contain summaries of evidence given by witnesses and the accused, and the anthropologist must learn how to use these. In doing so he may derive some benefit from the experience of social historians interested in the Middle Ages who also had to rely on court records to a considerable extent for the reconstruction of society.

The use of archives can thus be a means of effecting a rapprochement between history and the study of society, both of which have something to give to each other, and in this process the archivist has his part to play. Having begun his career as a record-keeper, concerned only with the needs of day-to-day administration, he gradually became more independent of the current work of government departments and largely devoted himself to the needs of a single specialized academic discipline. Finally he was reintegrated into the administrative process on a higher plane, taking not only a passive part as a recipient of documents, but also an active one in their production, dissemination and destruction. At the same time the number of research workers whom he served expanded immensely, and he became an important auxiliary, not only to historians, but to sociologists, social anthropologists and the world of scholarship at large.

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion see L. H. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society* Rhodes-Livingstone Paper in preparation.

## AS MEN ARE EVERYWHERE ELSE <sup>1</sup>

by

MAX GLUCKMAN

DAVID LIVINGSTONE'S great crossing of Africa from near the Victoria Falls to the West Coast, back, and thence to the East Coast, was largely financed by the chief of the Makololo tribe. And this is what he wrote of the Makololo people :

I have found it difficult to come to a conclusion on their character. They sometimes perform actions remarkably good, and sometimes as strangely the opposite. . . . After long observation, I came to the conclusion that they are just such a strange mixture of good and evil, as men are everywhere else . . . there are frequent instances of genuine kindness and liberality, as well as actions of an opposite character. . . . By a selection of cases of either kind, it would not be difficult to make these people appear as excessively good or uncommonly bad.

This theme, that the observer must carefully count and compare his facts, runs through all Livingstone's writings. Sir Richard Burton once said that African mothers lacked maternal feelings and would sell their children to slavers for a few beads : Livingstone commented that this view was based on a single incident ; and that one might similarly argue that English mothers lacked maternal feelings because some foundlings were abandoned by their parents.

Livingstone brought to his observations of African life and society a balanced, open mind, plus the care with which he collected his geographical data. And it is these qualities which make everything he wrote on Africa a century ago so valuable as records for both historian and anthropologist. Yet the passages showing these qualities are often neglected, perhaps because they threaten the mystique which has gathered about Livingstone the Missionary carrying the Gospel, Livingstone the Liberator fighting the slave-trade, Livingstone the Explorer making known the heart of darkest Africa, all in the midst of a savage and red-handed people. He was dauntless, a man of great courage, who faced every obstacle, from disease and hunger and fatigue, to the threats of armed warriors and marauding bands. But his own writings show that he was only very rarely in danger from the weapons of Africans.

<sup>1</sup> An Appreciation of Frank Debenham's *The Way to Ilala : David Livingstone's Pilgrimage* (London : Longmans, 25s.) and Jack Simmon's *Livingstone and Africa* (London : English Universities Press, 7s. 6d.) Originally broadcast on the Third Programme of the B.B.C., August 1954, and published in *The Listener*, 3rd September 1955.

On the contrary, more commonly he was dependent on the peaceful welcome and generous hospitality and help with which, throughout Central Africa, they helped him on his arduous way.

Professor Jack Simmons, in a short and popular biography of Livingstone, stresses several times the absence of prejudice from Livingstone's observations on Africans. And he concludes that 'in the course of his career [Livingstone] did more than any single man to alter the whole European conception of Africa and Africans'. But I do not think that even Simmons has pushed this argument far enough. For he uses Livingstone's works largely to illustrate the man's character, and to praise it. Praise is indeed due; but we need also an assessment of the political and social situation of African society itself. I feel that there still remains too much of the attitude instanced by Sir Reginald Coupland's comment (in *Kirk on the Zambesi*) on the decision of Bishop Mackenzie to fight the Yao slavers on the Shire Valley. 'All Englishmen in the country, in the minds of the natives at least,' Coupland wrote, 'would be entangled in their savage politics.' It is the adjective, 'savage', that is so revealing. Bishop Mackenzie's decision may have been ill-advised: but politics involving steel and fire are not peculiar to Africa. They are not only the prerogative of 'savages'. Politics in Africa were not essentially different from politics in Europe; and it is here that the riches of Livingstone's data have not been fully used by colonial historians. Most notably, this appears in the failure to assess why the Makololo treated Livingstone so liberally, and provided men and means for his attempts to open up trade-routes for them to the coast. In some part this was due to his character: but, in addition, he was, at that time, the key figure in Makololo foreign policy.

In his first book, Livingstone described how he went on behalf of the Makololo chief to negotiate what we would call non-aggression pacts with the chiefs to the north and west of the kingdom—including the chief of the Barotse, whom the Makololo had driven out of their homeland. Thus the Makololo chief financed Livingstone as a peacemaking ambassador, somewhat outside the ordinary political system, to get peace on certain frontiers. He wanted this peace because he hoped to concentrate all his forces on the south-east border to face the militant Matabele. Originally the Makololo had been driven out of Basutoland, far to the south. They had fought their way north to the Central Plateau of Northern Rhodesia, and had settled in comfort on the uplands. The Matabele attacked them and drove them out, so they went west to conquer Barotseland. But they did not like the swampy, fever-ridden plains of this river region, and pined to return to the plateau. But the Makololo were terrified of the Matabele. For example, when Livingstone was away on his journey to the West Coast, his father-in-law, Robert Moffat, who was at the Matabele capital, sent stores to him by a small party of Matabele warriors. The Makololo were afraid to cross



the river to receive the goods, and eventually the Matabele carriers deposited these on the bank, shouted that they had discharged their duty, and returned home. Only after many days did the Makololo collect the goods; but dared not bring them into the capital, lest they contained Matabele witchcraft. The goods were stored under a shelter on an island. In this terror of the Matabele, the Makololo chief had seen a hope in Livingstone. Livingstone was son-in-law to Moffat, who was a favourite of the Matabele king. If Livingstone would settle with the Makololo as missionary, perhaps influence could be brought through his father-in-law to induce the Matabele king to allow the Makololo to return in peace to the uplands. Hence they sent for Livingstone, hence they welcomed him, hence they supported and financed him loyally—always they kept urging him to become their missionary. They undoubtedly liked and respected him for himself, but it was as Moffat's son-in-law that they wanted him permanently among them. They were not interested at all in the other missionaries who came to settle among them; and these languished, some to death, in the Linyanti swamps. Livingstone held before them this constant promise of peace; and he never fulfilled it.

If my interpretation of Makololo dealings with Livingstone is correct—and it is based on Livingstone's own writings—then it suggests that no study of Livingstone's work is complete without an attempt to analyse the internal political situation of the different African regions through which he travelled. This is most important in Makolololand, where he was resident for a long time, and where he was so dependent on the people. I can speak of Makolololand (now Barotseland), for I have worked there as an anthropologist: but it is possible that similar interpretations could be made in other regions. This is a general lesson. But it also means that we must examine again the development of Livingstone's character.

The story of his disastrous incapacity for leading Europeans, as against his skill with Africans, has been told fully. But no biographer or historian has mentioned the way he let down the Makololo. After all the support they had given him, he returned to their country for only a month; and the chief, in Simmons's words, 'displayed a pathetically intense desire for English settlement in the Batoka Highlands, offering to set aside a defined part of his country for the purpose'. But, Simmons goes on, 'for the present, Livingstone could do nothing but express thanks for the offer and promise to consider it further'. He had 'performed his duty to the Makololo': he had indeed, I would say, done his duty by bringing home those Makololo who had marched with him to the East Coast, and whom he had left there when he returned to England. In the larger duty, he had failed to bring them their desired peace and protection. I have said that he did not fulfil his promise to the Makololo: I am tempted to put it more strongly, that he broke faith with them. And I think he knew it, and I tentatively suggest

that throughout his second expedition this knowledge may have been acting on him, to shut him off from his British companions.

When we look at Livingstone's actions, with understanding of the African societies among whom he moved, and realize that they had their own problems and complexities, the picture changes somewhat. For in most accounts of his explorations, the Africans appear too much as painted figures on a backdrop, savage, warlike, superstitious, slaving, but won over by Livingstone's personality. Livingstone is built up till he dwarfs thousands of Africans, who are dismissed as tyrannical chiefs, sufferers from slavers, slavers themselves—or helpful headmen by the way. Unhappily, this mystique—I can only call it 'a mystique'—spoils Professor Debenham's otherwise excellent book on Livingstone the Explorer. Livingstone here becomes a pilgrim, who finally moves through 'swamps of destiny' into the 'slough of despond'. And thus Debenham takes the vividness away from Livingstone's own records in which the Africans emerge as characters in their own right, 'just such a strange mixture of good and evil, as men are everywhere else'. For instance, Livingstone recorded a priceless long conversation he had with a rain-doctor in Bechuanaland, who confounded Livingstone's accusations that God, not his medicines, made the rain, by retorting that God, and not Livingstone's medicines, recovered the sick. There is a charming passage where he and his men were scolded, like a lot of children, by a Lubale chieftainess into falling in with her wishes, because they could no longer face her biting tongue. Another striking, neglected trait, is shown in his descriptions of how he observed medical etiquette in the heart of Africa. He would never treat a patient unless the African doctor called him into consultation, or unless this doctor had given up the case. In consultation, he never corrected the doctor in the presence of the patient, but only in private. Finally, when he and Kirk were asked to treat the Makololo chief, dying of a skin disease, Livingstone only agreed when (in his own words) 'the female physician already employed' assented, and on condition that 'she remained . . . in the Chief's establishment, on full pay'. It was part of his genius for getting on with and understanding Africans.

I find this element of understanding lacking in Professor Debenham's book; but nevertheless I feel that it is in many ways the best book yet written on Livingstone. For it does illuminate Livingstone's work as an explorer and geographer, and this is the work which has never been questioned. As a student of Makololo politics, I myself feel he let down the African people who helped him most. Again, though his work in general led to the ultimate putting down of the slave-trade, it has been said that the immediate effect of his journeys was twice to open up territory to slavers. Personally I do not accept this, but he certainly depended, during his last journeys, on slave-traders' charity. And in the end his missionary work was incidental. But he undoubtedly made known

Central Africa to the world, as no other explorer has done. And it was because he was fundamentally an explorer, that he finally became obsessed with the desire to go on and on through Africa, making more and more discoveries. It was this obsession that led to his breach of faith with the Makololo, this that led him to associate with his hated slave-traders, and this that led him to his death of disease in the swamps of Lake Bangweolu.

Professor Debenham brings out the strength of this obsession very well. He also describes more clearly than anyone else has done the worth of the discoveries, and assesses them against our present knowledge of Africa. Most striking, is Livingstone's insight. He produced a hypothesis relating the direction of the Trade Winds to the rotation of the earth. He understood the difficult hydrographical problems of the Upper Zambezi region, where rivers may flow in opposite directions at different seasons. He saw correctly that the central plateau of Africa was a large flat depression, with very slight elevations within it, but surrounded by a rim of higher hills, so that at the summer rains the rivers flooded into the lower parts of the depression, and when full might flow backwards across very low watersheds. The rivers broke through at the rim, in cascades and waterfalls. These are but examples of remarkable thinking, which stand out from the general achievement of covering the country at all, of mapping on his traverses and by reports of Africans and Arab traders, and of reporting in detail on climate, soil, water-systems, flora, fauna and people.

Debenham also brings out Livingstone's mistakes. They were of three kinds. First, there were the almost inevitable mistakes of the cartographer travelling in unmapped country, through swamp and forest, relying on the reports of others, and often impeded by clouds from making star-readings. Secondly, mistakes were caused when his instruments were damaged, or went wrong. Professor Debenham discusses, thus, a series of longitudinal readings which Livingstone took on his last journey and which got his rough maps out of shape, and led him to wander vainly in the Bangweolu swamps, to his death. Here accidents of fate perpetuated his errors. His first voyage on Lake Bangweolu was made in a stolen dugout: the thieving paddlers would not go beyond a certain point, for it led into the territory of those they had robbed. This halt prevented Livingstone later from recognizing where he was, and thus correcting the erroneous results taken from his damaged chronometers.

It is the third set of errors which are most striking when we try to understand Livingstone's character. After he had returned to the Central Zambezi from the West Coast, he started to survey the Zambezi downstream to see if it was navigable as far as the gorges below the Victoria Falls. To travel in easier country, he made one big detour away from the river; and thus by chance failed to see the Kebrabasa rapids. One sight of these would have convinced

him that they could not be passed as normally navigable, and the whole character of his second expedition might have changed. He made the assumption that there would be no difficult cataracts, but only small rapids, on this stretch of the river. Yet, Debenham points out, Livingstone's own figures for heights above sea-level showed that the river had a considerable fall somewhere on this stretch of its course. One can only conclude that Livingstone was so determined that the Zambezi should be navigable, that he misconstrued his own evidence. He was already exhibiting an obsessional trait about geographical facts which was to develop later into a conviction that he would find, in the Lake Bangweolu region, the Nile's sources. For a time he thought that the Nile might rise from the northern end of Lake Tanganyika, though again known heights made that extremely unlikely. He only abandoned that idea when he travelled with Stanley to the northern end. Now he met two Swahili-Arab traders who told him, correctly, of a region where four rivers rise close together and run in different directions; and he became convinced that this was Herodotus's description of the sources of the Nile. Determinedly he pursued his search for this region of fountains, and only occasionally did he admit that he might be seeking for the sources of the Congo. Here, indeed, bad luck had dogged him: when travelling by dugout up the west bank of Lake Tanganyika, he had just escaped finding the exit to the Congo.

Professor Debenham brings out how these obsessions haunted Livingstone and drove him on his later arduous journeys. He always rejected, in the end, the sensible course, in his determination that one more effort would make him the true discoverer of Nile's origins. He became convinced that Sir John Kirk, at Zanzibar, was not supporting him. To press on, he became dependent on his bitter enemies, the slavers. Anything—at all costs—his journey of discovery must be pressed on. He pressed it on to important explorations. He pressed it on to his death.

The mystique about Livingstone has been built up, quite unnecessarily, to make him a hero for Europe. Yet it is also striking, that in many parts, he is also a hero for Africans: since in the new states of Central Africa there are few men who can be revered by several African tribes, let alone by whites and blacks, at once. The people of what was Makolololand remember him for what they call his *butu*, his sense of humankindness. Here, may be, and not only in his mapping of lakes, rivers and mountains, and despite his weaknesses and obsessions,—here lies one of his greatest achievements;—that he provided the material, as Professor Simmons says, 'to alter the whole European conception of Africa and Africans'. In his journeyings, he also gave the Africans a view of the Europeans they could admire. Perhaps one day Livingstone's memorial will be that Whites and Blacks in Africa will see one another, as he saw the Makololo,—'just such a strange mixture of good and evil, as men are everywhere else'.



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